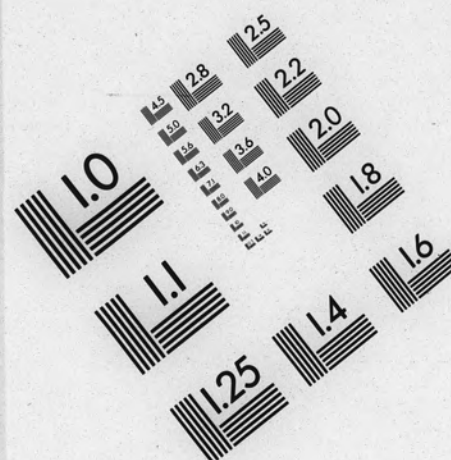


Journal, 1953.

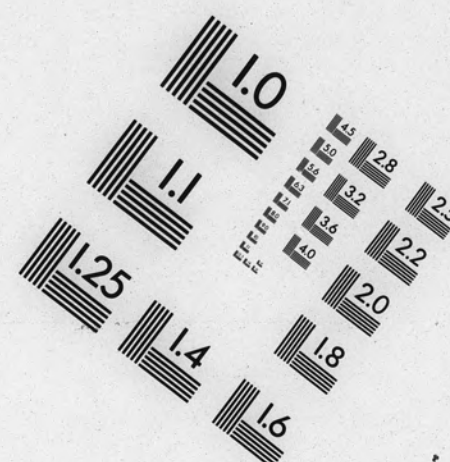




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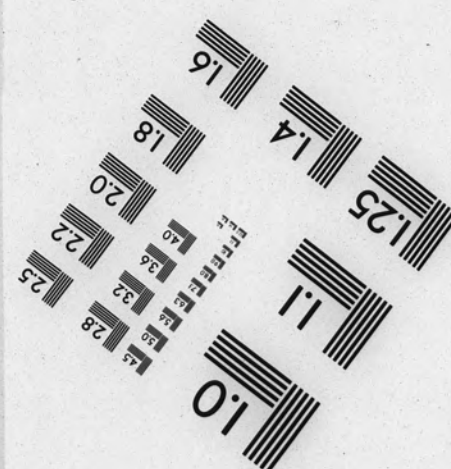
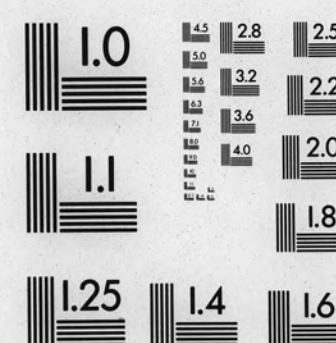
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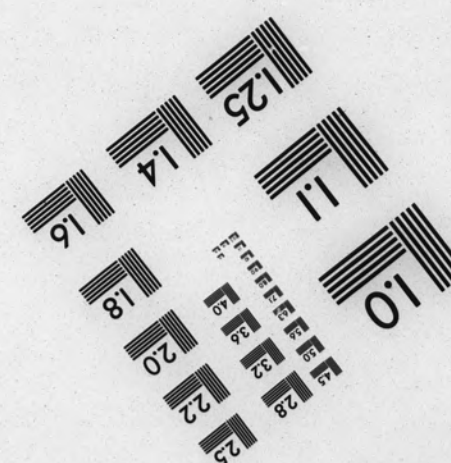
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5856

JOURNAL OF FRANCOIS MIGNON

- 1953 -

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Thursday, January 1st, 1953.

Memorandum:

After a day of all blue and gold, it is now drizzling and warmer, even though one needed no coat before the clouds brought New Year's daylight hours to a close.

What I like best about the close of day is the probability that it will permit a return to routine, --a status which is always treasured by the sloth and the conservative, I guess.

It was good to see the General this morning. He came over to Yucca, bringing me some wine, pretty in coloring but looking suspiciously like Sherry. But the impulse behind the bottle is the thing and I never have difficulty finding customers even though this or that variety doesn't always tickle my palate. I always look forward with pleasure to our little sessions together and although neither of us had anything vital to relate, it was pleasant just chatting.

Both sets of the S. G. department are building homes, -- each using a different contractor, and it will be interesting to see if both are equally satisfied with their respective efforts.

After the General had been called away to go back into the Red River section to inspect the new herds of cattle, I passed by the house across the fence where I found all the ladies just heading out for Watchitoches. I thought Celeste seemed rather on the subdued side. Their departure let S. J. junior alone, and so he and I had an opportunity to take the world apart a little. He gives the impression of radiant health and is as gay as a cricket. Later he showed me some braces he is trying out in order to be able to stand eventually. He tries them for 45 minutes a day, I don't know what advantage these will offer since he has no muscles that will respond to any nerves below his waist, but I suppose there is some desirable point just in being able to stand, although what that could be, isn't quite clear to me.

We dined at the big house and there said goodbye. I had intended seeing Frances Henry later at Celeste's, but pilgrims interfered with my intentions. Frances plans a quick initial trip to Europe late in March, --perhaps a couple of weeks on the continent, but with a life time of no appointments and



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a fat bank account, I can't imagine why she should make such a rush of the thing. The last I heard, Celeste still plans to make her jaunt late in June. I have never before given much thought as to the probable thousands of reasons why people go to Europe, and now, at long last that I am conscious that there must be so many varied and inexplicable causes, I guess I wouldn't care to bother trying to discover the whys and the wherefores.

Third hand, I heard it rumored tonight that Orealia had been located visiting kin folk somewhere between Derry and the Gorham hill section. That is all I heard. Personally I doubt if she will ever resume her position next door although one never knows. A good servant has been lost through the extravagance of nerve sprees and although Aurelia has put up with them for years, I reckon there may well be a limit eventually.

Then, too, it is possible the girl just wants to frolic a little and doesn't re-act much to the ups and downs of educated employers as much as I imagine. After all, the new secretary in my own set up appeared Monday and Tuesday and then didn't appear Wednesday and Thursday, and for what reason I can't imagine except as her brother explained when he passed this way this afternoon:

"She's likin' to ride up and down the road in her cousin's new ole car."

I was disappointed primarily because there was a hand written letter, - or note, which probably wasn't anything especial, although as it was post marked Waco and seemed to be signed "Helen", I assume it may well be from little Miss Baldwin, and it is certainly wonderful, --if this be true that it is from her, --that she is able to take pen in hand once more.

Last night I finished the Denmark book and today came something entitled "Windows For the Crown Prince" by Elizabeth Grey Vining or Viney or some such. I expect it is the thing mentioned in Talking Book Topics as having been penned by the governess of the Japanese Crown Prince. I shall sample it later tonight.

I don't recall if I mentioned that last week when the Campbells arrived, they brought an impressive array of fireworks which we didn't get around to do much about. But last night I figured there would be activity in that department and I accordingly gave them to Peter to take to his nephews living down the road a piece. I learned later the Roman candles and sky-rockets were a great success and that the Bengal fire was pretty-pretty, and thus it would appear that 1953 really got ushered in with

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Friday, January 2nd, 1953.

Memorandum:

Another substantial shower last night but a fat golden moon before 2 this morning, followed by clear skies all day, but accompanied by a wind that was keen enough to make believable the weather man's prediction that the thermometer will sag to 32 tonight.

I never appreciated the iron pot so much as I did tonight. Along toward the close of day I got myself tangled up in all kinds of messy projects and at first dark decided I would do a bit of rug beating and general house cleaning in anticipation of a big pilgrimage rush on Saturday. All went along swimmingly until, after developing quite an encrustation of dirt, I finally got around to divest myself of my clothes and step into the tub, only to discover that not humiliating of circumstances at such a moment, --there was no water.

Undaunted, however, I dressed myself in a pair of sandals and grabbing a bucket, streamed out into the moonlight and toated a few buckets of water from the pot. I'm not a cold water maniac but cold water is so much nicer than no water at all that I was thankful for the pot and its contents even though as a result of my endeavors, I felt not unlike an ambulating ice cake.

Dr. Knipmeyer came by in the morning to pick up some sacks of cotton hulls I am giving him for his garden. He is planning to take Madam Knipmeyer on a little vacation to Cocoa, Florida, -- somewhere between Daytona and Miami to visit one of their sons, and as they will be gone a couple of weeks, I shall miss them on Thursdays.

Mrs. Coombs came by with Mr. and Mrs. Charles Wood in the afternoon. I was glad to see them but their visit did eat in on gardening I was undertaking with Andy. Andy tells me Aurelia came home this noon after visiting her kin folk in Gorham and seems pretty nervous, which is a other way of saying, I suppose, that she doesn't intend resuming her position across the fence. This is



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unfortunate for all concerned but more difficult for the lady whose unbridled emotionalism caused the final break since a servant can always find plenty of places but an employer can look quite a while for satisfactory help. I saw Celeste for a few minutes this morning. She is still on the tense side and she explained that nobody in the world understands her and her problems. Among other things, --and there are many, --this, of course, is just another way of saying she is feeling sorry for herself which makes her road a little more difficult although there may or may not be some advantage in her own ignorance of at least some of her own problems. I am glad the jaunt to California begins around the 20th or 21st, for perhaps a change of scenery will contribute whatever new vistas are said to aid in solving various and sundry problems.

Although I haven't thought much about the matter of what magazine ~~xxxx~~ I shall nominate for recording, I am thinking at the moment that perhaps the New York Times Magazine Section may be my choice. It may be felt by the powers that be that this material is too much like the material in Readers Digest, but as of up to now, it comes closer to my desires than anything else I can think of off hand. So many magazines change from decade to decade, and since I haven't read any in a dozen or 15 years, I have no notion as to what any of them are like at the moment. Once The New Republic was an excellent sheet and at another time The Nation ranked along with Outlook as of substantial value, but I believe Outlook has long since been dead and buried and so may the Nation have passed out, too, so far as I know.

And speaking of magazines generally, I'm wondering if illustration achieved anything special with its Noel number this year and what, if any, particular subject it stressed. For years and years I have wanted to put my finger in that pie but I shall never get around to do so.

And speaking of picture publications, I have long wanted to remark upon the beauty of the Life reproduction of Channonneau which appeared in the near Christmas issue, along with that very inter sting collection of miniatures from the Romanoff collection. It is with such material that wonders could be forthcoming if Life and Illustration could get their heads together.

One commentary on Christmas might deal with my luck in getting no cigarettes, which was all to the good, since I had a very ample supply. There were 12 gifts of cookies and cakes of which I never have an over abundance and an assortment of wines, not a single bottle of which was port. Among the nicer things coming to hand was the suet-peanut butter balls on which the old mocking bird and a bevy of cardinals are pecking madly. So much for now and may your week end be one of peace.....

5861

Sunday, January 4th, 1953.

Memorandum:

A sun-shiny week end but a little on the cool side, and withal fairly peaceful.

I had pilgrims Saturday afternoon along about three when Ora telephoned. She seems ever so much happier, after her week in the clinic. They discovered she has some kind of a business intestinal, that will recur only if she fails to keep to a fairly rigid diet, although the latter is such that she can have eggs, baked potato, and meat, but must never so much as glance at any green vegetable, raw or cooked and that includes lettuce. And she must never touch anything containing alcohol. As she doesn't incline toward spirits anyway, the latter restraint isn't too irksome. It is thought that a couple of weeks in bed may turn things so she can be up and about again. I am glad for her sake and most re-assuring is the cheery quality of her voice.

I dined across the fence where things seemed so-so although the shortness of nerves tends to create that constant awareness that the top of the volcano may explode at the slightest jar, such as her husband's failure to instantly snatch at a plate that is passed or some such trifle. It is so nice to know that California is on the schedule for the 20th. I don't know what effect a quick glimpse at the Rockies will do, --but wonders as a sedative, I hope.

A lovely old lady, Mrs. Livingston, died in town last night. I had met her but once although I am fairly well acquainted with her son and daughter in law. Her death was a 11 last night and her burial this afternoon at 3. That still isn't up to the record of Elizabeth Brandon Stanton who, if memory serves, died at 11 in the morning and was buried at 3 in the afternoon of the same day.

I jotted down a preliminary note to the American Foundation for the Blind, tossing out this idea. If another magazine is going to be re-ordered on the basis that there may be subscribers for the various disks, why not make the transcription more or less real in that one or more advertisements be included. After all, --and this is the point, --if radio programs can tack on some



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Tenderleaf Tea or a dab of Blue Bonnet Margarine, why not have like products appear in the recorded magazine. The reader could take these by ear just as the sighted person can by sight when any magazine is purchased. And of course the vast advantage would be that the advertiser would thereby contribute substantially, perhaps in its entirety, the cost of the recording, and thus the subscriber could get his magazine for almost nothing and the sponsoring concern can take off the investment from his income tax.

I shall be interested to see what if any reaction comes from such a suggestion, and I shall of course pass along anything coming to hand.

I running over the assets and liabilities of the turn of the year, I discover that in the liability section is one Elmer Davis who seems to have disappeared completely from my air waves. I formerly tuned him in on K ALB Alexandria at 10 p.m. but a vast amount of devotion was required to catch much that he had to say, what with some old Mexican station horning in on the same wave length most of the time. But I don't have to bend an ear any more, for now some kind of a basket ball game seems to be the thing, instead of Mr. Davis, that gets a nightly scramble. Perhaps Mr. D. is vacationing temporarily or perhaps I shall have to fish farther afield and at some other hour for him. If you should have any ideas on the matter, I should welcome any suggestions. I used to grab him off 15 minutes earlier, --9:45 until 10 over some Chicag station but that wasn't satisfactory either, since one good cloud in the sky would blot out that ether wave completely. It's all so humiliating, this fruitless pursuit of the elusive Mr. D.

I continue knocking off quite a stack of mail but seem to be making slight dents in the stuff that is piled too high. I don't seem to see the car which came yesterday from Irma Somperyac Willard, saying she had missed me at Christmas as she had gone down to Key West to see her Annapolis graduated son, and so look around at the homes of such people as Earnest Hemingway, Tennessee Williams and so on.

I did find the John Knight card which I shall enclose. I think you will agree with me that in view of the house to which it was sent, the illustration is inordinately apt. Perhaps if torn at the fold, the card carrying the Yucca might make a pretty book mark. --The mocking birds and cardinals were busy today with their butter ball, which they love and you would have loved seeing them have a go at it.....

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5863

Monday, January 5th, 1953.

Memorandum:

I am puzzled, as are you, if you have already glanced through one of the enclosures.

That Sister, after her lunatic performance at Christmas, should begin her address with "Dearest" is no surprise.

I am under the impression Caroline has already acknowledged the Grandpere plate to me, but there has been such heavy mail, I couldn't be sure. But I would assume she might be talking of some other plate, were it not for the fact that she refers to it as having been posted from Melrose. That seems to suggest Caroline has merely lost her mind for the moment, which is quite possible, but I think you will agree with me the twist is odd. It goes without saying I shall pass this news along to little Miss Denholme who will certainly have some extremely pertinent remark or other to make.

The weather was all blue and gold today, with the thermometer sufficiently high to enable one to be comfortable without a coat. Accordingly there was much activity in the "back to the soil" movement and quite a bustle about the big house, too, as Juanita Y. C.'s mama, assumed sovereignty all day in making that department spotless while carpenters were putting doors and windows, too long neglected, back into order. Juanita is a splendid cook and a swell number and everyone is entranced at J. A.'s decision that too much was enough so far as the former occupant of that post was concerned.

And speaking of food, I must say I was entranced when Ed Morrow remarked tonight that Mrs. Roosevelt lunched with Mr. Churchill and his host today at the 5th Avenue home of the latter. Sometimes I wonder why it is I experience such pleasure in just hearing that Mrs. R. has had some additional honor paid her, and gratefully I find feelings of sorrow being expended for some people, --perhaps lots of people, who have always seemed denied the sensation of that warmth, that is felt about the heart when certain names are mentioned.



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I was glad to have a telephone from Ora this morning. She said her morning mail had brought a report that a set of the Cane River plates which she had sent to Atlanta had been smashed in transit, and could she get another set. She could. But the Grandperes are exhausted, and it does look as though I had better order some more. That design will always astonish me, for what with comparatively few people having ever read *Children of Strangers*, I am astonished it should have rolled in any direction except toward the descendants.

And speaking of Ora, I must ask her the next time she calls if she heard about the frolicsome ram of her brother-in-law, J. H. Williams. It seems the ram, definitely a rural resident, suddenly found himself in town the other day, Friday, I guess it was, and proceeded to sample urban life a bit. The first place that appealed to him was along the upper end of Front Street, hard by Uncle Jack tipping his hat, for across the road from the statue is a florist's shop, and there the ram nibbled with considerable abandon on a flock of potted camellias that were gracing the front of the store. But the owners of this flowering restaurant exhibited no enthusiastic hospitality and were so disagreeable, in fact, as to threaten calling the police. And so the ram meandered down through the center of Front Street, only to find people threatening to restrain him when he arrived at the lower end of the thoroughfare where the same Jitney Jungle that housed Adam and Eve a couple of years back, stands on the corner. The ram hadn't the slightest notion of being captured, and so when his assailants approached him from a Southern and Western direction, the ram simplified his escape simply by leaping through the huge plate glass window giving on Front Street, and slap on through the adjoining one giving on the side street. It was a very unheeded, and while the ram, unfamiliar with plate glass, seemed a little startled by the racket his leap occasioned, he received not a single scratch and lost not a ringlet of wool. But, and Eve would have understood this point, he left the Jungle a wreck. The last that was seen of him, he was moseying along in the general direction of the college up on the hill, and for all I know, he may have matriculated by now, if, indeed, he hasn't already landed in the locker plant.

It seems to me there was some other tom foolery in town I want to report, but it eludes me at the moment, and so I shall just let this slide along. I am hoping you are getting some of our sunshine and the New Year's Eve slush has long since departed and that you are comparatively free of holiday guests.....

3382

5865

Tuesday, January 5th, 1953.

Memorandum:

And so, just before supper time, an 18 year old black boy tapped at my door. He asked:

"I wonders if you could let me have some minty." "Minty?"

I hadn't the vaguest notion what he was driving at. He repeated his request. I still didn't know. And so I asked him what he was fixing to use it for. He said he wanted to give it to his baby.

Then the light dawned. What he wanted, of course, was mint tea.

The baby is 15 days old. It was born in the Alexandria Charity and as it was ailing when the mother and child were discharged, the parents were instructed to return with the baby last Sunday. Some local quack of color tells them that is tomfoolery, as he can bring it around by rubbing the child's gum and dosing it with mint tea sur-charged with coal oil, as they call it here, --kerosene in the North.

And the killing thing about it is that in spite of all that, the child probably has a fair chance of survival, although I wonder that so many of them do under the circumstances.

The day continued yesterday's blue and gold design but tomorrow we are promised cloudy and colder weather. In view of the calendar's present stage, a bit of cold is to be expected but it is pleasant to be without a coat.

In fairness to the lady across the fence, I must report that in a quavering voice this morning, she told me she had been wrong in treating Aurellia as she had and that a won Aurellia was probably as true a friend as she would ever have. Later I learned she drove down to Aurellia's house and apologized for last week's flare up, wept a little and asked Aurellia to resume her domestic service. Aurellia declined but both ladies cried, as I understand it, and under the circumstances, perhaps that is a good sign. Whether Aurellia will ever come back is quite a different story, and I shouldn't be surprised if



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she finally does or does not.

Just to prove that people are never satisfied, I shall here voice my latest complaint. The cook of the past 6 or 8 years was so poor, I would always have been hungry except for the presence of ample supplies of bread and milk. And now the new cook is so marvelous in what she stirs up that unless I put on the breaks, I shall be uncomfortable every time I push back from the table. This really seems too good to be of much lasting quality, but, brother, am I making she most of it.

Last night on the Bob Hawk Camel show, which you may or may not have heard, one of the people quizzed off yonder in Los Angeles was a man, employed as a door keeper in Congress. I never fell out of bed when he said his home was at Chopin, Louisiana, hard by the old plantation of Robert McAlpin where Uncle Tom is buried. The man was a rather stupid fellow and an endless talker. He was named Handley or some such. J. H. strolled over this evening to pick me up for supper. He started telling me about having heard the Bob Hawk show and said a couple of months ago he had picked up the man, Handley, who was on last night's program. I didn't know that J. H. ever listened to the radio and wasn't it odd he should have stumbled over that particular broadcast.

J. H. took a good gander at the pot and said he couldn't see any gold fish in it. I told him perhaps that was because there weren't any. He said he is going to do something about that, --and I shudder, for like his mama, when he sets his mind on some such point, one is likely to end up with a thousand fish, -- or if not quite so many, at least a couple of whales, and while the pot is good sized, it isn't quite that big.

I read a few more pages from "Windows for the Crown Prince" and liked what I read. I should like to recommend it to Friend Miller but hesitate about doing so in view of her vast enthusiasm for the Chinese and her lack of enthusiasm for the children of the rising sun. There is something about the way Mrs. Vining, the author, --I know not how to spell her name, speaks of the Japanese that reminds me so much of the way Dr. Miller spoke of the Chinese. Isn't it odd how China is now so deeply under a cloud and Japan out in the sunshine of popular acclaim.

It has been nice chatting, even though I didn't get around to say anything, but I have been thinking lots and lots.....

5867

Wednesday, January 7th, 1953.

Memorandum:

The mulatto is generally recognized as physically more delicate than the negro and his tendency to faint under stress is accordingly the greater. But today Fred Sarpie proved an exception to the rule.

Fred is a tenant on the Compton plantation which, as you know, adjoins Grandpere's Church across the river. Fred is about 25, has a wife and a child or two and his wife is pregnant at the moment.

This morning Fred was operating a tractor whose motor was running, although the machine was not in motion, --the tractor being used in turning a corn grinding machine or some such. Somehow Fred's pant cuff got caught in one of the tractor's revolving rods and before he could turn off the switch, his leg had been torn from his body, his other leg broken and his skull cracked. The leg was left in the tractor when they rushed him to the hospital, and Fred himself never lost consciousness. I assume that must be some kind of a record and would seem to prove that ability to faint would, under such circumstances, be a wonderful blessing.

The cold mass of air which has kept the Mississippi basin frozen tight down to the Arkansas line, has had not success in its combat with the warm Gulf breezes that continue keeping us in the mid 70's. Yesterday the cold front stole across the Arkansas-Louisiana line, creeping down some dozen miles into the Pelican State, but a gust of warm air threw the cold blanket back, and it remains so pleasantly balmy at this bend of the river that as I write these lines at 9:30 tonight, all doors and windows of Yucca are open and only the calendar suggests it isn't Spring.

From the Lowell Thomas broadcast tonight, I learned that today's tea party at Bernard Baruch's included Messrs Churchill and Eisenhower and the Duke and Duchess of Windsor. Such a combination ought to have many ingredients in it for an interesting sitting. In view of the friendly relations that have always existed between the Prime Minister and the Duke and the well known respect the former has always had for the station of the latter, I should imagine the personal touch in evidence over this afternoon's tea cups would



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make most interesting looking and listening.

A few odds and ends, --such as the St. Francisville Democrat, and something about Penland and the Picayune magazine containing the Rosswood article go forward to you in the morrow's mail. I suppose the Democrat may contain reference to Mrs. Sterling's Natchitoches bow. I thought you might like the Penland pages for your scrapbook. The Rosswood article is of scant interest except as it gives an account of the people who restored the place and it does carry a picture of the house, the story of whose building I rescued from obliteration a few years back. Eventually I shall pull around in my "tresors" and find a transcript of the diary Dr. Wade kept when building the old mansion, and I'll send it along for your delectation. I shall also eventually track down the photographs I took when the old Wade - Maemer place was nothing but a forgotten relic, being used as a tenement to house several negro families. It goes without saying I want none of this material back.

The enclosure is a tacit piece of evidence as to the nervousness still obtaining across the fence because of the absence of a servant. The lady spoke of a picture in the Sunday paper and said she would be glad to clip it out for me if I cared to have it. I would. And so it was clipped over the coffee cups, and naturally I said nothing as I noticed she was deftly snipping off the caption, without which, the picture wouldn't mean much. It is of Mrs. Whitfield Jack, recently appointed Chairman of the Red Cross chapter functioning in the Shreveport section of Louisiana, and, as you know, Mrs. Whitfield Jack is Frances Rand. It is said the picture isn't any good, but even so it is sufficient to convey the idea which has always impressed me that Frances looks not at all like either of her parents. And speaking of the latter, I am wondering what ever happened to the Dr. and Blythe. The first Saturday in December was their last visit up this way, which does seem like quite a while back.

What with all the Natchitoches Parish Henrys heading out for California on January 20th, I have knocked off a couple of letters, --one to Martha Robinson and one to Carolyn Ramsey, pointing out that the week end of the 24th - 25th, might be advantageous for literary conferences. Knowing both ladies as we do and their utter lack of dependability, we may expect to hear nothing from either or wake up suddenly to discover both of them in our lap at the same time. It's odd how such unusually brilliant people can be so dumb about the value of any kind of a program or schedule. But since we must make the most of whatever materials are at hand, we might as well take a chance on getting too much in the hope that we may succeed in getting at least a little.....

5869

Thursday, January 8th, 1953.

Memorandum:

The latest report from the hospital is that Fred Sarpie is doing fine. Somehow such a report seems a little optimistic, what with yesterday's torn off leg, the other broken and a fractured skull, all in a single go-round, but, in spite of the A.M.A., I hope the hospital officials know what they are talking about.

As to the atmospheric phenomenon, the weather locally remains as mild as May, although the cold front continues pushing over the Louisiana-Arkansas line, only to be rolled back by the spanking Gulf breeze, which, I hope, will continue blowing until Jack Frost gives up his assault as a bad job and goes wandering off toward the Great Lakes or some such out of the way place.

The Millsbaugh Drug Company telephoned today to say they are currently selling Melrose Plantation plates and could they have a few more.

And in today's post came a letter from Rock Hall a part of which leads me to feel they must have failed to receive or have misfiled a sketch, --how pretentious to call it by that name, which I did of the African house with a covering sheet giving the inscription which I wished to be used. But I shall make another and send it along so that their William Stewart, --that's the Baltimore artist's name we have been waiting for, --so that Mr. Stewart can put the thing into proper perspective.

For sentimental reasons, I should rather like to have Nina have a finger in the balance of the Cane River pie, but I don't know if she is very enthusiastic about dipping into such business and I must say I don't see any advantage to her in doing so, although she certainly has always been more than generous about lending a hand. This is one of those cases in which her assistance is not needed but in which I feel hesitant about asking her if she would care to participate feeling as I do that she might feel constrained to undertake further assistance for our sake even though she may have other demands on her time. Perhaps I can phrase a letter to her that will make the matter quite clear, and I can't imagine her having any sentimental desire to have a part in rounding out more in the series, but, on the other hand, she might.

Perhaps, in some way, I shall be able to discover her really wishes.



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Ora telephoned to acknowledge receipt of the plates she needed to replace those broken in the mail, and said she is going to Shreveport tomorrow for a check up and that she is beginning to feel she is well on the way back to comparative normalcy.

Mrs. Coombs telephoned, too, saying that she plans heading out for New Orleans next week to enter the Oschner Clinic. For months she has been receiving much shots and heaven knows what all as a consequence of a nerve thing that developed as a result of a jar to her spinal column that by some strange twist is gradually shortening one of her legs and is likely to cripple her if something isn't corrected soon. She has no sense about expending her energies in behalf of her people served by the Welfare Department and I think two or three weeks in a clinic would do her a world of good if it provided nothing but rest. I hope these horrible examples, as cited above, may inspire little Miss Lee to be ever more vigilant to conserve her own strength, --a thing which I realize perfectly well is easy enough to recommend on my part when no suggestion is forth-coming as to how this is to be accomplished.

Mrs. Wood telephoned, as between this paragraph and the above. She is wrestling with a paper on mulatto civilization and asks if she can come down early next week for a conference. I told her that she might but that as I suspected her of being racially prejudiced, it seemed to me a great pity she should waste her time on a subject which probably had but scant enthusiasm for her. She gasped a little at that blast and said that again I had proven exactly what she had remarked to somebody the other day, to wit, that she couldn't understand how she, like other people, would take such slaps from me and even go so far as to keep on inviting me to dinner parties and the like, when all the time she and everybody else knew perfectly well in advance that I would always decline, --but, she hastened to add, she certainly would appreciate it if I would give her an hour for a conference, and if I cared to, I might drive back to town with her for dinner with her family. What a squirrel brain that woman has, and yet she is kindly disposed and is of sufficient mentality to serve as an instructor at the local college from time to time.

Well, so things unravel during this second week of the New Year, and I continue concentrating on the thought that we may escape wintry blasts during the next four weeks, which is almost a guarantee that we shall thereby escape winter.....

5882

5871

Friday, January 9th, 1953.

Memorandum:

And so the cold front finally smashed through and this morning ice winds were sending the mercury down to 35, and there it remained all day, but along about first dark it climbed back up to 42, so perhaps both the wind and cold have worn themselves out, I hope.

As for the enclosure, it speaks for itself, and while some people might be able to understand it, it probably would never be offered as Exhibit A as to just how a well balance mind would work.

I passed by Celeste's this afternoon, thinking to give her a hand at covering her camellias but discovered she had done so a couple of hours earlier, along about 2. Frances Henry came in and later joined Eugene and me at supper. I walked with her to the car. She asked me what I thought some of the reasons might be for the extreme nervousness across the fence. We agreed it was mostly physical, or at least we hoped so. Perhaps things will start improving since this morning I noticed a new servant, --Ruby, daughter of Mitchell, the axe. My guess is that Ruby might survive until after California but scarcely until Europe.

Sometimes I wonder if every family really goes through such a perpetual hurly-burly as this one does. Perhaps so. But with all of them financially secure and therefore free to dabble in anything that might lend for entertainment and happiness and satisfaction they seem wonderfully geared to emotional panic and unhappiness. Although my knowledge of intimate family life is extremely limited, I can't believe the local set up is a fair example of the ultimate in domestic achievement, for if it is, then marriage as an ideal is the biggest fraud ever put over on human society.

Three uninteresting bags blew in at 12:30 today, hailing from some place near Waco. They had known Helen but hadn't seen her in several years. I gave them a race-around in lieu of a tour, but even that was more than they could assimilate. They said the Chamber of Commerce of Baton Rouge had recommended they see Melrose and I could bat that Chamber with pleasure.



2821

5872

From where I sit, the heaps of papers and correspondence gracing my downy couch suggests that I would do better to fold up my beard in my chair tonight and give the poor old four poster a rest. I had expected much secretarial help this afternoon but every mother's son and daughter arrived just at the supper hour, which for what reason, I know not, was stepped up half an hour.

I don't recall if I ever sorted out any of the Storm messages of recent vintage and sent them along. Probably not, since I don't seem to have done much sorting of any description.

Perhaps you did get a look at the one in which the lady suggested a flock of names among those by which she is called by her friends and relatives, remarking that actually her first name is William, which certainly strikes me as odd. I know that her niece, Kay, calls her Bill which again sounds odd in view of the exquisite delicacy of la Storm. As for myself, I so seldom think of people by their names that one or the other doesn't make too much impression on me, but if I had a mind to search the lists of every name in the world with a view to finding one for la Storm, certainly Bill would be the last that would strike me as appropriate.

I think I have before confessed what must be my extreme old fashionedness in calling most people by their first names. I must this reluctance goes so far that I even find myself a little startled when in reading books such as the memoirs of Admiral Beatty when the President of the United States writes to his Vichy Ambassador with the wonderfully informal salutation:

"Dear Bill,...."

You can readily imagine how odd it would seem to me, were I ever to take pen in hand to address a note to South Carolina, with "Dear Bill" as an opener. But in the same breath, I must concede the point that if I lived to be a million, I doubt if I would ever accustom myself to addressing la Storm by her real first name or any variation thereof, such as Willie or Will or Billy, just to mention a few which are used in turn by various members of the household.

But odd names are much to the fore in the Vining book, and as the book progresses, the lady employs more and more proper names, not one of which I can distinguish from the next, and half the time I am quite ignorant of the identity of people to whom she has probably referred several times previously. Her accounts of the contacts with General McArthur remain unfailingly favorable and although there is nothing very startling in the book, it is quite interesting throughout. She mentions the Crown Prince reading a Japanese translation of "Gone With the Wind". I find myself wondering how one would translate "fiddle dee dee" into any language. But now to work, as I hold the thought that the impending week end may be a nice, quiet, happy one for little Miss Lee.....

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5873

Sunday, January 11th, 1953.

Memorandum:

A comparatively quiet week end, --all blue and gold, --and a few pilgrims who, with one exception, were pleasant enough.

The unpleasant caller was Sister on Saturday afternoon, spilling the most amazing tales, some of which were spun up about episodes whose basis were laid at gatherings at which I was present on Christmas Day when she and her brood were making life unpleasant for everyone.

As time progresses, she seems to stir up lies that are much less imaginative and so ridiculous that they emerge altogether transparent in their fraudulence, and that of course is all to the good so far as her inability to convince any one of their authenticity.

She remained with me for perhaps half an hour at Yucca, tearing everybody apart, with especial emphasis on Celeste and Madam Regard. Then she hastened to the store to complain to J. H. that "everything is being taken out of the big house and placed in Yucca".

But what a waste of time and energy to talk about lunatics, and I can say with satisfaction that a half hour or so concluded the session, and at supper J. H. laughed and said "Sister is crazier than ever. She told me about the removal of stuff from the big house and when I asked her to name something she mentioned the McAlpin stencil and I told her the Madam had carried that over there while Lyle was still living here and she could think of nothing else".

On the pleasanter side, there were a few nice pilgrims, both today and yesterday, including John Cockran, an old friend of the Madam's, in whose Alexandria office is employed none other than la Montespan. We covered much ground and I was content to do much of the listening, although I concluded that my grapevine from that quarter must have been functioning fairly well, since I learn nothing that was particularly new or interesting.

I finished the Vining book on Saturday night and even skimmed through a few pages of "Flamingo Hunt" or some such by Dahl and it was light and entertaining and just what I needed after Saturday afternoon's sitting.



5874

For the first time in quite a while, that is to say perhaps a month, I found an opportunity to chat for a few moments with Madam Regard after supper tonight. She was beaming with happiness when she mentioned she had received such a nice letter from a person whom she felt she had known for so long and for whom she had so much affection. She mentioned a busy schedule which little Miss Lee had been experiencing and how somehow she managed to keep her letter so cheery and pleasant in spite of a program which Madam Regard felt must have been strenuous in the extreme. She spoke again and again of how much pleasure the letter had afforded her and only because people joined us for general chatter did she cease saying such nice things about the person who to her seemed one of the loveliest people she knew. You would have loved her for her sweetness, and what my reactions were, I scarcely need set down.

A recent letter from Rock Hall seemed to imply that during recent re-arrangements of their office or some such, the data which I had supplied by way of design and instructions for the African House creation had been lost or mislaid or some such. And so I be-stirred myself today, aming a new sketch and a new alignment of suggestions which I shall forward on the morrow. I hold the thought that during the interim, or shortly after receiving today's creation, the original one isn't found, for I have greatly simplified the new one, and if the manufacturer should ever make the error of trying to combine certain features of the one with those of the other, the result would be both curious and ridiculous.

The African House will never enjoy any wide appeal but it ought to sell enough to defray costs and thus may form another "porcelain page" for the Vane River story.

I should like to round up the design in its entirety for the Audubon thing at the earliest possible date in order that with the surge of Spring pilgrimage in the region of the Felicianas, this item may be available. But perhaps I may be able to slide down to Oakley, should Carol, on whom I count not, might pass this way within the next couple of weeks.

As for the Matchitoches number, I am in no hurry about it, since it might get its best reception if released in September or October, but I don't want to wait until mid summer to accomplish the work, since I think it better to create the thing and let it stand for a while on the holding shelf that to count too heavily on everything working perfectly, including delivery, at the last moment.

So things turn and thus is a tiresome letter contrived. Peraps I shall do better on the morrow. I so much hope your week end has been pleasant.....

5875

Monday, January 14th, 1953.

Memorandum:

J. H. has a mild influenza but being the world's worst patient, it is impossible for anyone to judge by his actions just how down he feels; and of course he isn't dreaming of breaking his helter-skelter routine of up and down the road and all over the place. The only concession he made today was to put a few drops of whiskey in what appeared to be a bottle already full of coke.

He said the Wenks passed by the store again on Saturday night after he and I had supped together. He said it appears that at long last Dr. Wenk will have to go to the Army.

That is one man I hope the Army never gets.

But possessed as the Wenks are with a home in Shreveport and another in Cloutierville, Sister has the wonderful idea of renting Melrose for the two year period while the husband is likely to be away. Imagine.

J. H. laughed as he told about it and said he told her that was one thing she would have to take up with the General, for technically, Stephen is President of the Estate and, as in the present situation, provides a perfect loop hole for J. H. to escape giving a direct answer.

In my opinion, the motive for Sister wanting to rent Melrose is based solely on the desire to wreck it as much as possible and to make life untenable for Celeste and Madam Regard. Of course not one of her brothers would countenance such a thing which she ought to know, but as she is possessed of an addled brain, one wouldn't expect her to sense anything that would be so obvious to anyone else.

This morning I was glad to find Celeste seeming much more like herself. I hope the flurry of the recent month is definitely passed. Perhaps the approach of the California trip, 10 days away, may have something to do with "brighter skies".

Perhaps the real blue skies are having their positive reflections on personalities, too, for the weather is really wonderful, although there was an unexpected heavy frost last night, but it did no damage. I did little gardening today, for appointments



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were such that I couldn't really get down to business before having to get back out again. I had promised to dictate a paper on the mulatto for the D. A. R. and there were one or two requesters that were of no interest but took up time. I did manage, however, to dig up enough Giant's Beard to encircle the sugar cauldron, and the line of greenery around the base gives a pleasant note to the rusty metal of the pot itself, and in summe when a line of zinnias make a band of bright colors between the Giant's Beard and the pot, the effect will be altogether entrancing, I think, and perhaps Carolyn or Dr. Rand may get a shot at it on color film.

While I think of it, I would ask if you by any chance know the address of some house in the metropolitan area carrying musical records dating back over the years. One of the college professors from town was talking about the possibility of there being such a place and it seemed to me I had heard of one or more such places, but for the life of me I couldn't recall. I expect that Landry Organization along there on 42nd Street, southside between 6th and Broadway, probably had quite a collection, but they may no longer be in business and it is possible you may chance to have heard of somebody dealing especially in out dated records. I pray you to go to no trouble on this point, for it is a courtesy that will be appreciated but never expected, should the information not be easily available.

Last night I knocked off long enough to hear the U. S. Steel program which was a play about one Jane, and perhaps that was the name of the piece. I liked it for it reminded me of Lonsdale, and the presence of Edna Best in the cast reminded me of other Lonsdales in which she had appeared, but I know not if Lonsdale was the author. Somehow it seems to me U. S. Steel, by employing the Theatre Guild to do their plays, has easily out-ranked the splendid quality that used to characterize the Lux plays. I have heard many of the latter of late, but I haven't struck the right ones, perhaps, when I did listen, and I was so bored with the advertising at the conclusion of the thing that I got the impression that the verve of the earlier Lux presentations was gone.

Later I caught up with Miss Roundtree and Senator Taft. I wonder if I just imagine it, and I suppose that is it, but the way the news is slanted during the past week suggests more than ever that D. D. E. is kow-towing mightily to R.A.T. Well, a week hence and we shall begin to witness which one is really calling the tunes.....

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Tuesday, January 13th, 1953.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Thursday letter in today's post, giving me such vivid vignettes of your hurly-burly holidays. It was good to know you had two successive prolonged week ends. I reckon we should be thankful for the opportunity it afforded to keep the domestic ship from sinking but one can scarcely prevent the mind from envisioning how wonderful it would have been, had these two breaks have been expendable as one's own fancy dictated. But, on the other hand, there is the satisfaction of having done one's duty, although said duty was not precisely what anyone had volunteered for, but I reckon there must be some compensation in your own heart for having made happy a season which otherwise would have been mighty dreary for your countless guests.

I'm especially glad you told me about the jig-saw puzzle that, after all these years, came into use again. I expect nobody could imagine how one player found in the game something that was ultra special in the memory department.

I am sorry you had to experience the same kind of mental disorder on Christmas that in a way was as disturbing as the one that was being played out at this bend of the river. But in this quarter, such performances are usual and at least are concentrated on members of the family, and while there is no excuse for such business, it seems to me that your experience was much worse, what with the participants being guests and no kin to their hostess. Personally, I find it impossible to imagine how anyone can let himself go to such a degree when knowingly he must realize how unpleasant he is making everyone else, but then, of course, if the mind weren't disordered to start with, such acts wouldn't be created in the first place.

I liked your account of how you managed New Year's Eve, and thank heaven the television provided so much entertainment for your guests. And thanks for telling me about the march home in the snow under a full moon. Readily, as you imagined, I can easily enough guess how the moon and the whiteness of the snow



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suggested bamboo hedges and white gardens.

I am glad that the enforced entertainment schedule at least gave you an opportunity to get a peep at the United Nations and it was certainly sweet of the little ones to round out your Christmas with the gift, secured by joint pooling of their funds. So often one gesture of that nature provides so much reimbursement for all the physical expenditures on the part of the hostess, but I can well imagine with what satisfaction when it was all over, that you found yourself "back home", among your own treasures.

Ora telephoned me today to say that she had remained in Shreveport to have an operation and had returned home last night. She added that on her arrival, she had written a letter of resignation to the local college, advising them that she would no longer be associated with that institution. She said the doctors advised her to give up extra-domestic activities, and I am glad that she brought herself around to following their advice, for she is not strong and, I think, can accomplish a lot more important things at home, what with several children and a million interests to claim her attention.

For a second day in a row, everything across the fence seems lovely and I am holding the thought it may so continue. Obviously Celeste never was told by her husband of Sister's request to rent Melrose for a two year period. Can you imagine what havoc would be wrought if such an impossible thing were ever to materialize, which, I hasten to venture the opinion, could never be imagined. And of course the most outlandish thing about the suggestion in the beginning is the fact that the Wenks are already in possession of two homes, --one in Shreveport which perhaps they had in mind to rent, although I cannot imagine that, and a second in Cloutierville, which they apparently are unable to rent or sell. Why, by the wildest stretch of the imagination, they should ever dream of renting another is beyond me, except as it represents a whim on Sister's part wherein she pictured herself as thus being able to make life miserable for all of her in-laws. Well, that is one possibility that is an impossibility, I should hope, so far as securing a home base from which the big guns could be trained in every direction.

It has been so nice exchanging notes with each other, and I hope you will not attempt writing until the pre-holiday routine is really re-established and you have had ample opportunity to catch your breath.....

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Wednesday, January 14th, 1953.

Memorandum:

Up North, it seems to me, they used to talk about the "January thaw".

That must be what we are having, although we needn't start luxuriating with too much abandon, since the weather man is doing a hap of talking about another cold front moving down from Montana and the Dakotas.

Be that as it may, the Chinese magnolia buds continue swelling and a huge pale green leaf at the tip of a banana plant, perhaps 8 or 10 feet about ground level, unfolded today, but before the week has played out, Jack Frost will probably have taken care of that.

While the warm weather holds, however, I am trying to make the most of the opportunity it affords to push things about in the botanical section, for one of these days the cold rains will begin descending upon us, and then I shall find no more excuses for deserting the Underwood for out of door activities. And I had better get a move on, too, if I ever grind out the article for the Watchitoches Times.

I was delighted to skim through a couple of pages of Mrs. Kirk's "Moscow Post-Mark" or whatever it is called when the end of the day made my arm chair appear doubly inviting. As the Curtiss publishing company is mentioned as holding part of the copyright, I assume this volume may have appeared in some magazine before it made its bow in book form. I find it easy reading and almost everything written about Moscow seems interesting from Tolstoy on down.

Mrs. Kirk's book reminds me somehow of another lady who used to write for the Saturday Evening Post, --Grace King Waddington, although I cannot say why. I don't recall the Waddington style and I suppose it was quite different from la Kirk's, but both ladies were suing something of the same



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diplomatic aspects of life, even though the settings and the ways of life differed so much, and I suppose that may be the reason the writings of the one recall the other to my mind.

Gradually I am digging down into some of my Christmas cards, and I shall pass along one or two now and then as I dispose of them, although frequently they may be of little or no interest, and all of them you may toss slap into the trash basket if you please.

Inadvertently I caused a scuffle between a couple of my neighbors which was altogether unexpected. I was digging around in the Iris Garden, just beyond the avant-cour, and as invariably happens when I begin gardening, Grandpa and Die Frau soon showed up to sit around observing operations or, when I get to fiddling in the earth with my hands, sometimes they do so much milling around, obviously "trying to help", that I toss them to some vantage point where they can continue to assist by their presence and not my the switching of their tails in my face. It was at this stage when I picked up Grandpa and tossed him on to a nice fluffy tuft of dried grease where to his astonishment and mine, he landed slap on a Jack Rabbit just about twice his size, -- as big a rabbit as I ever saw. Instantly both animals rolled over and over in a scuffle and then in the twinkling of an eye, both leaped into the air, twisting in opposite directions, the rabbit bounding off in a generally Southerly direction toward Celeste's and Grandpa scooting toward the Yucca gallery. A little later I found Grandpa, sitting on the doorstep, rubbing his nose with his paw, and the nose was a bit bloody slap on the end, which would certainly be unpleasant, were he to develop the sniffles and had to make use of a handkerchief much.

The bulb garden is a sea of snowy narcissus and a vase of them, interspersed with blue hyacinthes, stands here on my desk before me, flanked on each side by the lovely white tapers, festooned with the tiny pine cones. Somehow the combination is wonderfully satisfying, what with Christmas candles and Spring flowers uniting the seasons and the hearts that made possible their juncture.

And now I am going to do a little mail, and I feel mighty noble about it, for my impulse is to enjoy a little musicale right now, but I shall like it the better, perhaps, because of the anticipation which will be realized in an hour or so. Do try to get lots of rest these days, even though you never will catch up with the lost hours of the holidays.....

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Thursday, January 15th, 1953.

Memorandum:

The warm weather continues to hold, - fair and velvety, but tomorrow we are promised a low of 20 degrees, and that ought to put the more forward plants in their respective places.

Three or four Chinese magnolias spilled their perfume about the place today, but their good work will last but a day, I guess.

The mail is beginning to increase in volume after the let up following hard on the heels of the holiday deluge. But nothing of much interest came to hand, although it is always a pleasure to hear from James M. Cain whose letter I shall try to track down and enclose.

Although I am pretty hazy as to the identity of each card that arrived at Christmas time, it does seem to me that I received none from the Hollomans. I must check on this and regardless, I must dash them off a New Year's greeting. It has never been clear to me what actually happened regarding the Picayune article, for there obviously was some kind of a scuffle around or about it, -- or at least the illustrations which were eliminated, but whether this was some quirk on the Holloman side or elsewhere, I know not, and care less.

I read a couple of more pages from Mrs. Kirk's book and wondered why in referring to a parallel between her and Mary King Waddington in yesterday's memo, I had called Mrs. Waddington Grace, which must have stemmed from Grace King, which was certainly dumb on my part.

One thing I learned from the "Moscow Post Mark" was that Russia's pet poet, - Pushkin, was the grandson of a negro slave or Peter the Great. I had always thought of Papa and Sonny Dumas as being about the only two European literary lights with sepia antecedents. I must mention this fact to Dora who would certainly be interested if he doesn't already know it. Oddly enough,



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I have always taken everybody's word for it that Pushkin was a wonderful poet, but, come to think of it, I don't recall ever dabbled in any of the translations of his works. I think they have been translated, but translated poetry isn't likely to be much to begin with, and so perhaps I haven't missed too much.

I also learned from the Kirk volume that Dostievski's works are "verboten" in Russia, or at least they are not smiled upon which is just another way of saying, I suppose, that they are out. But odd enough Gogol and Chekov are approved. Of course, Tolstoy is way up in front, and somehow this puzzles me a bit since Dostievski seems to me might be expected to rank as high as Tolstoy among the be-whiskered gentlemen of the Kremlin, since Dostievski was certainly inclined to herald the need for change as much as Tolstoy. But perhaps there is where the rub comes in, -- perhaps, after it is all boiled down, the Reverend Uncle Joe never did favor any changes in the autocracy, --merely a replacement of the autocrats.

I saw Madam Regard for a few minutes this afternoon. She spoke again of you and the pleasure she continues to experience in reading your sweet letter to her. It would do your heart good to know how much your kindness means to her.

She plans to go to Mansura along about Tuesday, I believe, and Celeste plans to head out for California on Wednesday.

Today I learned of a couple of wealthy Cane River planters and their wives who are driving to Washington for Tuesday's coronation. Naturally I'm puzzled why anybody would take such a jaunt for such a reason, and especially as they certainly are not Democrats although their money probably fattened the Taft coffers prior to Chicago. I found it a bit paradoxical that they should have asked Senator Long, --of all people, to secure seats for them for the parade. A letter from the Senator, however, expressed regret that no seats had been available for months, --the whole bleacher business disposed of immediately after the political flub-dubbery of last autumn when the parade seats were gobbled up at \$35.00 a throw. Can you imagine anybody accepting a seat and wanting to sit through such a thing even if paid \$35.00 to do so.

I was surprised, speaking of the Kremlin boys, when I learned from Ora the other day that she hailed the Whitaker Chamber's thing in the Post with the same enthusiasm Robina did. I was interested, too, when she hastened to add that her husband thought Chambers and all the rest of the pumpkin stuff just a lot of baloney.....

1882

5883

Friday, January 16th, 1953.

Memorandum: How nice to find your Monday letter in today's post.

It has been such a pleasant chat, and I learned so many things that were quite unknown to me that I find myself restless for the inability of talking about a half dozen of them endlessly. But that will eventually be the back log from which we may draw at some favorable time.

How kind of you to exert yourself so mightily in my behalf regarding the 150 anniversary of the Charleston Courier. I did not know about its impending appearance and as the enclosure from Monck's Corner which arrived today speaking nothing of the paper, I reckon if you are successful, it will be you and only you who thought about me. It really should be an excellent piece of business and if you had the issue mailed to you before sending it on to me, I hope you will keep it long and explore it when --and if -- there ever should be a moment's leisure.

I had not realized the the Reverend Paruch did business in your neighborhood and I was ever so interested to learn of your interests in catching a glimpse of him on occasion.

I had not heard of Mrs. Vanderbilt's death and did not know she had a granddaughter in Shreveport. I believe you said her name is Mrs. Charles McCain. J. H. has some sort of business connections with one of the McCains and they have on occasions gone to Mexico together, but I know not if this is the same family. I shall inquire about the Shreveport McCains casually one of these days and let you know.

It was all news to me, too, about the rumor that Clare Booth Luce might be named Ambassador to Italy. This is a surprise. It seems to me Clara wrote something several years back about her Italian adopting an Italian boy. Perhaps she has practiced up her Italian a bit on him if she didn't spout it before. If Mr. Eisenhower must appoint her to some diplomatic post, I think it would be lovely if he named such a bag to the post Vatican. Don't you think so.

Yes, I had the good fortune to hear the broadcast regarding the poet and Lincoln specialist's 75th birthday, and I found



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the whole thing wonderfully moving. It is always so thrilling that such honors are paid during the person's life. I was so happy that the whole thing had been carried out so beautifully.

And may I thank you for telling me about the new Elmer Davis hour. I was unable to fish for it at 6:15 tonight, but I shall be trying for it next week. I reckon such a time must be rather too early for you to get at all, or if so, at any degree of convenience.

I am so glad you are going to have the evening at the Opera. What nicer birthday gift could anyone have. And I shall be thinking of you on the 29th when you assist at the graduation. I am so glad for everyone concerned that the final examinations are within sight and that the formal education thus comes to a conclusion. I think of L. J. so often and I feel that this final hurdle is bound to mean so much more to her than the sweet girl graduate, for it must represent years of unceasing effort which only the parent can realize in all its ramifications since children, naturally, are inclined to take education more or less as a matter of course.

We are promised thermometer readings in the 20ies tonight, with much sleet. It is drizzling now at 9. I tucked in the Arenbourg and Yucca children but Celeste said she didn't think it was going to be very cold and accordingly was not going to make use of the somewhat elaborate covers which she has for that purpose. In view of the unanimous agreement on the part of weather stations from Shreveport to New Orleans, this decision on her part seems a little odd, but perhaps a warm Gulf breeze will roll back the cold, which I doubt, even though it has on occasion done so before. But as for myself, I shall go to sleep, awaken during the night and go to sleep again, and my mind will not be the least disturbed as to the protection of the "Children". Perhaps her sleep and wakin will be equally unruffled. I hope.

I notice the "Post-Marked Moscow" material was copyrighted in 1952 by Curtis Publishing Company. I find myself wondering if any of this book could have appeared before Ambassador Kirk was declared "Persona non grata" by the Kremlin. It doesn't seem possible, but if the Russians ever read any of this volume before the Kirks had left their post, I can't imagine them permitting their return, and so I ask myself if it was the Ambassador or his wife to whom they objected, for her book is certainly devastating so far as what the big boys are up to.....

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Sunday, January 18th, 1953.

Memorandum:

Thin patches of ice in exposed places reminded one of the cold snap that has been inching its way southward of late, but a brilliant sun throughout the day dissolved the ice and hiked up the thermometer to a point where it would seem the Jack Frost forces are shattered, so far as the present go-round is concerned.

Although still awaiting word for her own reception into a New Orleans hospital, Mrs. Coombs passed this way on Saturday and spoke very interestingly of a scene she had witnessed in a Shreveport hospital when she was calling on her daughter, a pneumonia patient up yonder.

While on the floor on which her daughter's room is situated, and while waiting to visit her, she was attracted by loud noises in an adjoining wing, and strolling in that direction, was amazed to hear a man's voice screaming:

"One more groan out of you and I'll break every black bone in your body."

A few seconds later, there was a tremendous crash when a tray was apparently hurled from somewhere to strike at someone or something.

An old colored woman, with the seal of death on her countenance, had been brought to the hospital some days before, --her first trip from beyond the confines of the plantation where she was born. Her illness was undoubtedly aggravated by her fear of all the strange sights that are manifest in any hospital, and ones which are probably doubly impressive in a colored ward. The poor thing obviously needed a sedative but all she was getting was denunciations and anything moveable pitched at her.

Mrs. Coombs said it was like a thunder bolt when she suddenly appeared in the doorway, surveyed the scene for a moment, and then staid in a rather firm voice:

"Dr. Morgan, it is perfectly obvious that you are in no condition to perform your duties at present. The hospital is over-crowded, the staff over worked, but the needs are ~~so~~ not so urgent that your services are required until such time as you have had an opportunity to rest and regain your sense of balance."



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She said the 30 year old man began shaking like a leaf and cowering before her, scurried out of the room.

Mrs. Coombs called a nurse and together they soothed the poor patient and administered a sedative, and Mrs. Coombs withdrew to visit her daughter.

She learned from the nurses that this sort of thing had been a daily feature of Dr. Morgan's visits to the colored ward. The impression is that he is furious with society that he has had to put in a certain amount of time as an intern in the hospital before beginning his independent professional practice, for, as he declares, his primary interest in life is to make money and he is restive at the delay in beginning, and is taking out his "mad" on the colored patients.

Mrs. Coombs has a connection near the top of the State Board governing hospitals and on Monday Dr. Morgan will find that new arrangements have been made concerning his status.

Well, so much for the Shreveport situation. On the local front, Celeste's cold or influenza or whatever, kept her home on Saturday afternoon. On Sunday morning she sent for the lady doctor, and although she was up and about for dinner, she remained in bed at supper time tonight. She says she has to go to town tomorrow to get her hair set, and take Madam Regard to Mansura on Tuesday so she can leave for California on Wednesday, but all such plans, it would seem to me, must be a bit nebular. Her temperature was at 101 this afternoon, and I think if she has the good sense to stay in bed for a few days, she will be up and doing again by the middle of the week.

I finished the Kirk book and discovered I had confused the 1951 Ambassadorial set up with the 1952 personnel. I believe Ambassador Kirk is an Admiral, while his successor was a General. Anyhow, I liked the book for the glimpses it gave of life behind the iron curtain as viewed from the Moscow vantage point.

With the air waves so filled with talk about preparations for Tuesday's Coronation, I haven't paid very close attention to all the predictions covering impending events. I did find one line amusing, however, --

"The Eisenhower cabinet is made up of 8 millionaires and a plumber."

I'm sure Ohio's A.A.T. would love that ~~xxxxx~~ summation of membership.....

5887

Monday, January 19th, 1953.

Memorandum:

Today's mail was fairly heavy, and so, as the letter from Carolyn was dated January 1st at the beginning, and ran for three single spaced pages, I thought I would save time by having my secretary gland at the last page to see if it bore any later dates. It did. And Carolyn says she will be coming on Sunday next.

I shall try to get to the earlier parts of the letter before she arrives. Rudolph will come Thursday, and so I am hoping to catch a mild breather between the departure of the one and the arrival of the other.

I heard an astonishing piece of news today. It seems "ole Virginia" tried to knock down the concrete and iron bridgehead across Red River at Grande Ecore, --and failed. But she did succeed in smashing her car beyond any hopes of ever getting it spliced back together again, but somehow avoided hurting herself. It is thought Caroline was not with her.

From correspondence with Caroline, following la Storm's visit, I assume the car must have been long getting untangled from the December smash-up. This latest twist therefore must have occurred pretty soon after the thing was put in running condition again. What next, do you reckon.

I telephoned the Sheriff to inquire for particulars. He had none but said there was a notation that there had been a Dormon accident but that it had been reported and disposed of by the State police rather than the Parish.

This noon the clerk had to run in to town for a few minutes and so I ran along, too, so that I could go over some of the prospective photographs that will be used for the anniversary issue of the Times. The



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clerk told me he would pick me up within half an hour, and so, after I had transacted a few matters with the Assistant Editor, -- Charles being out, -- I declined a proffered chair in the office, and chose to linger in the entrance, what with the day being fine. Cars were moving up and down the thoroughfare, but the place in front of the newspaper office was vacant. And then a car pulled to the curb and I stepped out, opened the door, and jumped in, saying:

"O. A. -- Let's hurry."

Imagine my surprise when, after nothing happened, I glanced at the driver to discover it was a policeman who was staring at me, naturally enough, as though he had just picked up a lunatic. I laughed instinctively, explained my regrets, and got out with the same alacrity as I had entered. The office then got out and entered a building next door, as I resume my vigil for Eugene. But two seconds later the policeman came hurrying over to me where he must have encountered people who had seen the episode. He spoke to me by name, saying he was acquainted with me even though we had never met and apologized for his failure to have been more neighborly. He said, immediately after his initial surprise, that I had said let's hurry, and that if I were pressed for time, he would be delighted to run me home at full speed, as his duties carried him almost any place in the Parish. Naturally I declined his offer, but thanked him for his kindness, and we both laughed over the mutual surprise I had occasioned.

At the coffee hour this morning, I dropped in to see what progress, -- if any, -- Celeste was making. Picture my surprise when I found her up and dressed and asking me if I didn't want to run in to town on any kind of business, as she was planning to skip in to have her hair set. The negroes all declare that "that lady doctor sure do have good medecine", and I'm bound to say I think they must be right.

So the week begins to unwind, and it looks as though the next couple of them might be busy. Today's sun brought out dozens of Chinese magnolias, so pilgrims will probably be in the offing, too.....

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Tuesday, January 20th, 1953.

Memorandum:

I forgot to mention that yesterday was a legal holiday, which is another way of saying the banks, State agencies, etc., were all on holiday. But as I had no business to transact with bankers or politicians, my sortie into Natchitoches was in no way inconvenienced. Perhaps you, even as I, might be curious to know what legal holiday was being celebrated. And as there isn't much point in guessing, I shall hasten to report that it was the birthday of Robert L. Lee.

Fortunately, today's in-coming mail was lighter, and so I got around to read the first two pages of Carolyn's letter. She, apparently, is learning the hard way that absentee plantation operation has its hazards and disappointments.

She is quite wrong, of course, in assuming that Lucille has been very brisk in her reports concerning Helen's recovery. You have had the two or three letters Lucille has written. They have been excellent, but by no means too numerous.

But how wonderful that Helen has recovered and is even resuming her column. I haven't heard any news that has pleased me so much since, from quite a different quarter, I learned that at long last little Miss Lee had experienced the marvelous sensation of realizing that what suddenly had taken on all the ear marks of Grand Central Station was once more her boudoir.

While Carolyn can find no possible advantage in the various plantation problems confronting her, for those of us not concerned with the matter there is a glimmer of hope that the pressure for grinding out a few literary pieces may inspire the lady to concentrate on that point with undivided attention during the immediate future. I am hoping the weather of next Monday or Tuesday may be favorable, for if it is, I shall



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make the most of it by having Carolyn drive me down to St. Francisville. I have written Mrs. Sterling I may pass her way. This trip would afford Carolyn an opportunity to get to know Mrs. Sterling and as I shall have taken the opportunity to lay the ground work, it will not be necessary for me to make a second trip later in the season when unfolding foliage makes picture taking more advantageous for artiles on the Audubon business and the graveyard.

As today was historic in the realm of politics, so, I predict, it is likely to be in the field of fashion, for my guess is, --and perhaps Hope is father to the Wish, that the Eisenhower espousal of the Homberg may see an end to that unbecoming item of Presidential headgear, the plug hat. In a way, it seems remarkable it should have survived so long. It seems like a far jump from George Washington's turban and I have no idea which of the Presidents first trotted out the silk stove pipe. I guess the earliest tin-type photo of a Chief Executive in one, showed Abraham Lincoln, seemingly more attenuated than his figured required. I don't recall ever having seen a picture of President Grant in one, -- and lack sufficient imagination to envision such an odd combination. T. R. looked like a over-grown boy, rigged up for a comical charade. Wilson, in a Fifth Avenue Liberty bond parade, got away with it better than almost anyone else, what with his slimness without being Lincolnesque in height. Harding probably looked more convincing than anyone else because he was able to wear clothes if not Presidential honors to particular advantage. I thought F. D. R. looked pretty terrible in one of the things. Truman under such a lid somehow suggested a professor who wasn't used to the darned thing but was willing to bear it with a grin and would be glad when it could be put back in moth balls. I can't conjure up a mental picture of Eisenhower flowering under one of these out moded monstrosities, and while I am hoping to find lots of things to admire in his Administration, nothing, I think, is likely to please me more esthetically than his inaugural headgear.

Well, Lord, what a heap a talk about hats. Locally today nobody needed one, except as a sun shade, for the weather continues its splendid course and gardening has been the order of the day.

On shell pink Chinese magnolia, -- a rather large one by the bindery, is in full flower and a joy to the soul. I hope there is a touch of Spring around your corner, too. ...

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Wednesday, January 21st, 1953.

Memorandum:

How nice to find the surprise package in the morning's post. As a matter of fact, due to some mechanical difficulty, my ribbon was getting pretty frayed at one end, and so I was doubly delight to find the pair of ribbons in the package.

But as I will further explain, I needed the Kools almost as much, and this is why. As soon as the ribbons came to hand, I secured the servucies of my favorite expert ribbon changer and to work he went. ut picture my disappointment when the little gaget in the middle of the machine which elevates the ribbon to be struck by the key, as against the roller,

said gaget fell slap off, which brought operations to a complete standstill. And so, thanks to your foresight, I could simply reach for a Kool to sooth my shattered nerves, and so all was well.

Never were two gifts more timely, the one providing a need that couldn't be made the most of, the other taking up the nerve slack which was certainly in order right then and there.

I shall make this communication, --and perhaps several subsequent ones, rather brief for I am forced to use the machine at the office, where there is much hurly burly and no time for a leisurely chat with you.

In the morning I am getting a new ribbon put on the Royal, which is a bit rust through years of neglect, and so I shall have something to whack away on, perhaps, and even though the keyboard isn't standard and some of the words may therefore turn out a little odd, it will serve as an imperfect medium to keep us in touch with each other regardless, until my machine is back in order again.

The weather continues favorable. Celeste returned by 9 this morning from South Louisiana and proved thereby she must have be-stirred herself before breakfast. She took off at 12:30 on her trip Westward. There was a change in railroad schedule at the last moment and the train did not head out for Shreveport as originally planned. Yesterday a 112 car train telescoped somewhere in the Shreveport area, with much burning of gasoline tanks, etc., and this morning, after the tracks had been cleared, another butaine tank exploded,



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ripping up more track and hurting no one, but pushing aside the normal progress of trains.

On the unimportant side, I got a kick out of a casual remark made by the explanation offered by one of my untutored friends when I asked where Beau and Juanita Mack got the name of Abel for their little boy. My informant explained that it really was Airdale but they just naturally slips from Abel to Airdale and back to Abel sometimes".

I have heard children in these parts named for very various unexpected objects, but never before did an Airdale enter the picture.

I am holding the thought that I may get my old Underwood back into working order again real soon, for Charles Cunningham is asking for the Helrose article and while it isn't too difficult to write the thing, a place such as the office where so many people are talking, asking to borrow this machine now and then, and generally pushing about is not at all conducive to helping one remember where one left off, or if he did or did not finish the last idea or set down the final point. But things will work out alright shortly, and in the mean time, I pray you to be patience with the distinctly odd memoranda which may come your way as a result of this peculiar situation in which I hammer them out.

Again my thanks for your thoughtfulness, and blessings on you both for the ribbons and for the nicotine that so helps to smooth out the up-sets of the moment.....

5893

Thursday, January 22nd, 1953.

Memorandum:

Observe the new ribbon, --and the old machine!

But better than that, let me hasten to say how nice it was to have found your nice fat envelope in today's post. It is so kind of you to have taken your first free moment for a chat, every word of which I absorbed with so much relish.

And thanks, too, for sending along the Lexington Avenue record shop address. That will be just fine and I thank you on behalf of the person for whom it was originally intended, too.

And in anticipation of the advent of The American Heritage, may I thank you also. As you will have notice from a Memo reaching your true hand since you penned the Saturday lines, the publication will be most timely since Carolyn, I suppose, -- although I am perhaps a little rash in such an assumption, -- will be here on Sunday or early next week, and we shall have an opportunity to explore possibilities in that direction.

And may I say how much I appreciate your thoughtfulness in sending along the excerpts from the Lestan Journal, recalling to my mind several details which I had already forgotten.

I think you are wonderful to have had the foresight and energy to make notations regarding various entries in the Journal so that you would know where to turn for them, and surely neither you nor I could ever have anticipated when the index was being made that we should have occasion to think of Rosswood entries so soon, -- if ever.

It goes without saying I was resentful when circumstances jockeyed me out of completing all the details contained in your envelope. The rumbling of thunder, the rolling of clouds, the sprinkle of rain, --and I suspect a desire on the part of the merchant planter to eat early for various subsequent undertakings, all united to ring the supper bell prematurely so that my sitting with the secretaries was cut short. I might get one other secretary later tonight, and if so, I may be able to run through whatever Robina and Nina



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may have had to say in letters arriving by today's post, but I shall save the balance of your envelope for tomorrow's sitting, since I prefer reading your communications with the secretary who is most efficient, for smoothness of conversation, even in indirect contact, seems ever so much nicer.

It goes without saying that I am delighted you and E.J. had such a lovely evening. I have never witnessed the piece you enjoyed so much but, of course am acquainted with the story and dabs of the music. I'm so glad the decors was so lavish, for performances of that nature can stand everything by way of added accoutrements. I suppose the two scenes from the Met. lingering longest in my mind for sheer brilliance were the 18th century interior for the gamin house in Manon and that place in Turandot where the star, her train spread half the width of the stage, mounts to the top most step of the throne, --and screams just like the peacock she resembled. I guess, while thinking about such matters, however, I might as well recall that the greatest concentration of lush color I ever saw on any stage was in the court room or trial scene in the production of The Merchant of Venice in which Peggy Wood played Portia to George Arliss's Shylock, --a glow of gorgeousness that would have driven a Titian crazy.

It makes me happy to learn about the immediate laboratory plans and the matrimonial possibilities, too. I know not precisely why, but somehow I feel as happy about the whole thing for the mother of the prospective bride as for the latter herself.

At mail time this morning, I toated this machine to the store, thinking I might send it in to town by the master. But the clerk, who knows nothing about a typewriter but is good at fiddling with mechanical contrivances, started taking this outfit apart, revoing the carriage and generally tearing the whole business to pieces. Eventually he go it back together again and it would seem as though it is tracking along alright, for which I am endlessly thankful, for it will make work on the Melrose article jog along ever so much easier.

If I get sleepy before going far on the Melrose thing tonight, I shall read a little about Mr. Hiss in the Francis X. Bush, "Guilty or Not Guilty" which came to hand today. Again my thanks for having made my day so happy.....

5895

Friday, January 23rd, 1953.

Memorandum:

Too much mail of the long hand variety and the result is that I never did get around to glance at the typed items.

I thought I had better explore a letter from Nina that came a day or so ago. There wasn't anything extraordinary in it, although she did like the right or rather the write up in the Picayune and asked me to send along any other designs if I would like her to have a finger in the pie. She also gave the names and addresses of people to whom she wants plates sent, but in characteristic vagueness, she didn't mention how many different ones she wanted to send to each, and I shall ask her about this point, --or perhaps it would be better if I shipped a flock of flying saucers to her and let her struggle with the addresses.

I shall retain her letter, awaiting her response and a bit more of deciphering which my secretaries couldn't make out.

And along with other mail came one from the Bluff which I thought I had better try to unravel, but I had scant success. Perhaps I can get Carolyn to help me with that one on Sunday. There is a request for pecanes to be sent to somebody in New Orleans but that will be easily disposed of since there are no more pecanes.

But there was one item in the post which I could examine in large measure on my own hook, for your excellent copy of Heritage arrived to make life seem worth living. Isn't it an elegant publication. The pictures alone are worth the entire publication and I know I am going to have a grand time when I get hold of someone like Dr. Knipmeyer to give me a hand with the text. I cannot tell you how much I appreciate having this issue as it will provide much by way of thought as to how and what can be developed at this bend of the river to suit pages in a future issue.

I got around to read a little from "Guilty or Not Guilty," and I must say I got a lot of things straightened out in my mind about finer points in the Hiss mystery that had eluded me at the time the trials were in progress. I haven't finished the piece as yet but I have already come to the conclusion that there may have



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been a lot more behind the scenes than ever came to the fore during the trial. In a way, I feel as though the Chambers initial move may have been made in the direction of blackmail, but that is but one of many surmises. I am wondering if the Hiss family could have been acquaintances of the Chambers in that season of the Administration when efforts were being made to build up Russia as a counter force against the Nazis and Fascists, and that when things altered on the world stage and when Mr. Hiss went on to greater responsibilities, the acquaintanceship should have dwindled quite naturally, -- a fact that Chambers resented and being the sort of person he is, thought he would do something about by way of vindictiveness. It isn't clear to me why the Hiss family should be giving Chambers 400- dollars although I suppose Chambers suggests this was payment for services rendered by Chambers to Uncle Joe's cause, but as Hiss seemed to be working for Chambers, according to the latter's account, I find that explanation of the money business doesn't follow. At best, the thing is confusing and I hope we both live long enough to understand the whole thing eventually.

A telephone from Mrs. Coombs last night reported that her daughter has been removed from the Shreveport hospital to her new home in Baton Rouge. She was to have received her diploma as a registered nurse at Northwestern State College last night, but she was not sufficiently recovered from her recent illness to be present. Mrs. Coombs was expecting to attend the graduating exercises, however, as a girl by the name of Owens whom Mrs. Coombs had engineered from a hill billy shack down Monette's Ferry way through High School and nursing school was also expecting to have the R. N. pinned on her. I suppose the rescuing of this child from deplorable surroundings, giving her an education and seeing her step out into the world as a nurse must give the lady an enormous sense of satisfaction. She explained the whole thing away, or tried to, by saying it was so easy to channel a second girl along since in thinking for the requirements of her own daughter, she simply had to operate on the basis of two.

Ora told me the other day on the telephone that one of her boys belongs to the same Boy Scout team that the Coombs boy attends. She said that R. B. was reading to her the other evening when their son, Johnny, returned from Scout meeting and said that the Coombs boy said his mother was going down to Melrose the next day to see Lestan and Johnny, to do him one better said: "That's nothing, my mother is going down there all the time." Ora said that for once she and R. B. couldn't take their son's boasting casually and they both exploded with merriment.

Well, so things turn, and it's "air-ish" tonight but things are tucked in safe and sound. And tomorrow will be the last free day for a week, and I shall think of the holidays and little Miss Lee.

5897

Sunday, January 25th, 1953.

Memorandum;

Yesterday and today have been two of the loveliest Spring days I can remember, all blue and gold on high, with waves of pink magnolia blossoms in between and oceans of white narcissus blossoms scenting every passing breeze.

Just at supper time last night came Mr. Allen of the Ford Foundation with his sister-in-law. They were entranced with what they had to see and asked if they might return on Sunday at 8:30 a.m. a week hence.

I was glad to stretch out their tour a little, what with the Wenks being here for supper. The doctor is wearing a brace on his back when in Shreveport. He claims arthritis is something the Army can use and that is what he has most of.

J. H. chatted with me for a while after quiet had been restored. He was leaving at 6:30 this morning for the Cotton Council at Dallas. He asked me if I thought any mid specialist could do Sister any good. I didn't. Among other crack-pot ideas Sister was handing out was that J. H. should take her son with him to Dallas and thence to San Francisco. Imagine.

Around 9 o'clock J. A. telephoned me to say Baton Rouge was calling. He asked if I was expecting a call and when I replied in the negative, he expressed the thought that it might be la Montepan and asked me to say that I hadn't seen him all afternoon and that I know not of his immediate plans. I had assumed the Dallas segment of the trip would not be made alone but I must have been wrong and apparently there's a ripple on the smooth surface of that liason had appointments for all afternoon, people who had written from Alexandria, Fort Worth and so on, but none of them put in an appearance, leaving me free to handle the unexpected.

One man and his wife, hailing from Shreveport, showed unusually poor judgement. I thought, when he stopped his car by the front gate and asked if might be speaking to Lestan. I said he might. He said he and his wife had but ten minutes and that they had long hoped to see Melrose but he would rather save that for a later time and spend the ten minutes conversing with me. I waved in the direction of the magnolia blossoms but he said he would take a chance of seeing them some other time. He was very pleasant but had I been in his shoes, I should have made the most of whatever the magnolias presented.



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I think I neglected to mention that I eventually got in touch with the Baton Rouge operator who asked me what seems to be the standard question during the past few years on the part of telephone switchboard artist:

"From whom were you expecting a call from Baton Rouge, sir."

And the killing part of it is, they never seem to believe you when you tell them in all truth that you weren't expecting a call from anybody.

Well, it turned out that the call was from Mrs. Sterling to whom I had written a note last week, scouting the idea that we might be in her neighborhood shortly. A friend of hers, who is a very nice person, and who is very much enchanted to find it read:

"Sent freney Vill 3211."

There may be better exchange names but I, personally, never read one that pleased me so much.

Mrs. Sterling had in mind to give a little luncheon for us at Oakley and I told her unless she heard to the contrary, we would make a round on Monday.

I had expected Carolyn at 2 this afternoon and she arrived promptly -- at 6:30.

We had a bite and a prolonged sitting afterward and it is now midnight. Last night I had kindly suggested that Carolyn might be more comfortable in his house and that he would be glad if she would occupy it during her visit if she cared to. My guess was that she would like the big house better, being more accustomed to it and she is accordingly occupy your room tonight.

She says she is not too certain about Carolyn's complete recuperation. Her mind tends to revert constantly to her accident which seems the more odd because during her prolonged hospitalization period, she stubbornly refused to accept the fact that there had been much of anything to it whereas the thing seems to increase in vividness and frequency in her mind as she gets farther away from it. She says, too, that Helen tends to talk rather more constantly than she formerly did, and a other thing that seems strange, although Carolyn was with her for six weeks during her recuperation, Helen on seeing her again after a two week interval, seemed to have forgotten that Carolyn had been with her. She things she is definitely mending but the progress isn't

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Monday, January 26th, 1953.

Memorandum:

It has been a fruitful day, I think, or at least it has been a good day for sowing seeds, and the soil and weather seemed in a receptive mood.

We headed out a little after 8, crossed the Mississippi on a ferry at "sent freney Vill" a little after 11 and were in Oakley by noon.

Mrs. Sterling met us in the long drive, --perhaps a quarter of a mile from the big house in a wonderfully romantic avenue of mes draped oaks, and a delicious luncheon was spread before a decorative fire in the west (left) room on the ground floor.

What I liked best about the luncheon was the servant, a black youth of about 17 or 18, whose costume reminded me of some Ethiopian rendition of a youthful Uncle Sam, for he was a convict from Angola, employed along with several others on Oakley, and the costumes of each were identical, -- gray and white stripes, but differed radically from the conventional striped prisoner's garb in that instead of the stripes running horizontally, they were vertical, giving the wearer an impression of greater height than he probably possessed. The dining room is white, and the sun was streaming in the windows, combining to emphasize the striking appearance of the black and white striped costume of the servant.

They have really done a fine job in splashing paint and hammering boards and putting on plaster, so that even though the furniture hasn't been brought in as yet, the house gives the impression of being already for the house furnishings that will make it a really delightful place.

I had forgotten there were three stories of average proportioned rooms, with an attic above, which really make the house seem remarkably tall.

There has been a heap of restoration work done in the gardens, and very pleasant brisk work by way of walks and broad steps, the small fenced gardens somehow reminding me a bit of the Williamsburgh restorations.

Immediately after luncheon, Carolyn went out to catch some exterior shots while I asked Mrs. Sterling to remain with me.



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at table where we could discuss various aspects of pending problems, --details regarding the plate, reservation on magazine articles, etc.

I succeeded easily in effecting one point which I had given some thought to on my way down. I intended, if possible, to write a text that would incorporate Mrs. Sterling's name, to appear in the text on the plate. My purpose was two-fold, first, it would be nice to mention her in this more or less permanent record on porcelain, as being the first curator, and secondly, I figured that if her name did appear, there would be added interest in the item on her part and whether she should remain as curator at Oakley indefinitely or not, her name of the plate might incline her to push its sale in the St. Francisville neighborhood in the years ahead.

I was delighted that I found her enthusiastic about being thus mentioned, and since Oakley, as a Memorial ark, has been concerned with the design or manufacture of the plate, the name of its first curator, I asked her to jot down the text that, after some discussion, it occurred to me to be so kind as to type it out in a letter to me to be sent on the morrow, and she was very happy to do so. This will assist me in the department of records should any fanatical historian of the region ever complain that I, as a Natchitoches member, had invaded the Feliciana without appropriate data covering the subject at hand.

Then Carolyn joined us and we made a tour of the old house and the adjacent building where Audubon lived. In the latter, there is, among other things, a big kitchen with a huge fire place, and no end of interesting ante bellum odds and ends, -- spinning wheel, locks, iron work and hardware, and two things one rarely sees, --a man trap and a bear trap, the biggest I have ever seen. They are fashioned like an ordinary steel trap, forming a circle when set, and a half circle when sprung. I reckon the radius or rather the diameter must be about 3 feet and the steel of such strength that I should think any bear or man caught in one might readily have his leg snapped slap off.

After a rather thorough tour of the house and gardens, we discussed publication plans for one or more articles and then took our leave. Mrs. Sterling gave us quite a bit of literature and this will be helpful in formulating the business. At St. Francisville we stopped for a moment at the Episcopal graveyard to snap a picture or two on the remaining films and were impressed by the great weight of the camellia blossoms, bending down the branches of the huge bushes and young trees. Thence back across the Mississippi and so home. It has been a fruitful day, I think, and one that will probably pay off generously later.

5901

Tuesday, January 27th, 1953.

This morning at the store before breakfast, I was surprised to learn of an accident that had taken place at the Melrose store, about 10 miles north of the "Big-rage" of Napoleon Bonaparte Carter. A flock of negroes, --ladies and gentlemen of Melrose, had gathered themselves together in a big old truck, poised to head out for Natchitoches to spend the afternoon and the night, attending the wake of the wife of Uncle Ben Williams who until a few months ago, dwelt in the house atop the Indian Mound, prior to their removal to town.

I know not which ran into which, but somehow at the intersection of the two highways, --perhaps 50 or 75 feet from the gallery of the Melrose store, a big old bull dozer and the truck full of people smashed into each other. A baby of Neenie, --Peter's sister, smashed scalp through the windshield, but --marvelous to relate, apparently wasn't too much the worse for wear. Two or three of the men, including Leg, --the Dark Duke seems forever in some kind of unexpected doings, were bounced from the truck and are hobbling around, "resting" from work because they feel "all stove up".

Peter was out on the scalp and from above his wrist straight down his hand and along his index finger, --carving that required several stitches.

One of the Williams men, a son of Uncle Ben's, was so injured in the spinal column that he appears to be paralyzed below the waist. The Natchitoches hospital reports that they aren't too sure about the man's condition, in as much as he seemed to be suffering from a shock that possibly was dual in nature, --the death of his mother, plus the physical battery.

All in all, it seemed to be quite a smash up and somehow lacked the glamor of Saturday night smash-ups, what with the thing having transpired on a Monday around high noon.

As for my own activities today, I again found myself in the big race both in the morning and afternoon. In the morning, Carolyn and I canvassed the West side of Cane River



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between the Melrose bridge and Bermuda. We found a few worthwhile subject, and were glad to make the most of an excuse to get in out of the brisk breeze for a few minutes by stopping for a few minutes to sip some of May Balthazar's finest Louisiana brew... She "hoovered" about us, passing fruit cake and dainty morsels of this and that, most meticulous in partaking of anything in the presence of white folks. May is a sight!

In the afternoon we ran in to town, keeping on the East bank of Cane River. I had telephoned Ora to say we might drop in for a moment, for I thought it an excellent opportunity to pick up a picture of her mother-in-law's house, a sketch of which I anticipate using as filler for the right extreme of the Hatchitoches plate, as it is the only 18th century building extant on that bank of the river in the town area. Even as May, so Ora served coffee.

Ora gave us directions so that we could easily follow along the proper roads that would land us at the very beginning of Cane River, some 6 or 7 miles North of town, where only the levy separates the present course of Red River from its former bed of what is now Cane. We staked out some sights for subsequent photographing for a story on Cane River for some magazine or other, and so headed along a westerly course adjacent to the Aswell property to the main highway to Grand Ecure. We did not stop at the Aswells, however, as we had too much other stuff to look into, and to get down on reaching home before supper.

Although or perhaps because it is after midnight that my light is struggling in opposition to the moonlit flood white garden, a passing freidn, seeing the paler gleam, dropped in for a quick night cap, and hence the disordered state of this letter, as between this paragraph and the above.

Guests dropped in around 9, --we had worked until that hour on the "Marie Therese" article for The Post, and after that we had a pleasant sitting, although I could be slept earlier and if not sleeping, could have tried to get caught up on the news which I have missed for the past couple of days.

I have an instinctive feeling that Carolyn will never get around to do the Oakley article, but at least the china business can be effected, which is something, and I shall keep on peking at Carolyn about the other articles, including Oakley, although she is going to find farming takes up more of her time, once she really gives it a thought. But I am gratified over the general view of things and something worth while.

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Wednesday, January 28th, 1953.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Wednesday and Friday letters in today's post.

And first off, may I hasten to tell you how deeply I am touched by the major portion of your Friday letter, relating to possibilities, abundantly within reach, as you so generously expressed it, concerning the data outlined in the clipping.

I haven't touched any mail of late, and what with your two letters before me, I was quite content to have a go at them, reserving the reading of the H. T. Kane clipping and the other, as covered by your Friday letter, until another sitting.

Carolyn had departed an hour or so after dinner this noon, and I had half a million things to do before the secretaries, whom I hadn't seen since heaven knows when. They arrived just before supper, and it was so nice that I could complete both letters, prior to their departure, --it afforded me so much delectable fare for the soul while I dawdled over the fine food on the supper table.

Yes, I shall naturally read the article with vast interest and shall certainly approach the matter of making the most of this latest scientific marvel in a mood of anticipation that few people, perhaps, experience many times during a life span.

Bless your heart again for having once more tossed me a life line, evidences of a regard which have manifested themselves in such a variety of ways so constantly down through all the years between then and now. Clouds are bound to darken everyone's horizon from time to time, but how easily all that can be borne when the radiance such as comes when the clouds are pierced by a shaft of sunshine such as little Miss Lydia Lee causes to break through.

In response to your inquiries regarding the several broadcasts, including the one wherein Fibber decided to become a writer, I enjoyed, even as did you, of the news items you mentioned, however, I had heard nothing. I was so fascinated by the

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accounts of the various real estate matters, none of which I had heard anything, either at Monticello or Hyde Park, and may I thank you, too, for having been so thoughtful as to pass along particulars about Moneks Corner, and how it got its name. The Albemarle connection is doubly illuminating just at this time, as I so recently ran across the individual bearing that name on several occasions in reading various volumes, and particularly, if I remember correctly, the books in the Ixer series. The Savannah and The Potomac wherein the fabulous land grants of Charles 2nd, -- so many issued not in England but rather at the Chateau of St. Germain-en-Laye.

And may I thank you, too, for telling me about the portrait of Queen Elizabeth for the British Embassy in Washington, and about the painter and the Texas angles concerned therewith.

And may I thank you for telling me about the H. T. Kane material in the National Geographic of February and thanks to your information regarding his finger being in the Louisiana Purchase festivities' pie, there, perhaps, is one reason why the Louis XIV business of Natchitoches is being held up. The French legal mind is insisting that the Chairman of the Board governing impending celebrations for the event in the State, give its approval for the or of the tentative plans for Natchitoches before the Government of France feels it can appropriately proceed. It isn't difficult to figure out how the smooth working of the local plans are being gummed up to a slow down that is almost a stop if Mr. Kane is migrating his influence on the Board. I notice there is a letter from her in a recent mail, as yet not opened, and she may be a bit of fire which may be employed to fight a fire. We shall see.

The only piece of mail, other than yours, was a large envelope, -- a foot square, sent air mail by Rock Hall, and I have merely glanced at the finished sketch. The text isn't any good, I think, but the whole design appears entirely satisfactory, and so there seems to be a practical guarantee thereby that the African House will be added to the Cape River series of porcelain pages this year.

In my last letter to Caroline, perhaps 2 or 3 weeks ago, I gave her my telephone number, saying she might want to contact me direct. And so, from Natchitoches today, she telephoned the store to tell me, through a subsequent message delivered by the clerk that she was leaving some flower, hyacinths for me in town and that I had been wrong when writing Robina that she Virginia wasn't effected by the accident, in fact that she has been in bed at Briarwood ever since. But more on the morrow, and again my thanks for all the happiness you have again brought to me.....

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Thursday, January 29th, 1953.

Memorandum:

The merry-go-round continues on its dizzy whirl. The concentration is jammed up in a single week, but the absence of family is a help, the weather cooperative and sufficient energy to carry me along with sufficient zest to make things elier rather nicely, and a week hence I shall probably be grateful that the pressure came in concentrated form so that a like space of comparative quiet will neatly put things into balance.

I was glad to welcome Dr. and Mrs. Knipmeyer back to their old time schedule, following their vacation in Florida. But no sooner had they dropped in than Ed Rand appeared.

The Knipmeyers reported an elegant journey and Ed. Rand, bringing me a Christmas gift on behalf of his mother, reported the family as being alright, except Mrs. White, Blythe's mother, who is on fro day to day to everyone's astonishment.

Ed. Rand was bubbling over with gaiety on one point that was easily understandable. It seems Dr. Rand took Ellen Lockett, Ed's daughter, to New Orleans last week where an operation was performed on her hip and the physicians feel it was so much success that from my understanding of Dr. Rand's disease, which is mighty sketchy, this miracle does happen once in a great while, although there are also temporary successes, -- such as Ed. Rand himself has experienced in the past, with the old failure of joint and socket to grow the one in proportion to the other, so that the difficulty in walking develops as the physical growth of the youngster continues. Let us hope this operation, however, may be one of the miracles.

And just as Ed. Rand and the Knipmeyers were leaving, Radolph arrived. He seems fine and will stay until Saturday, I believe. Before his arrival, I telephoned the head of the Art Section at the college in town, making an appointment for him on the morrow to see the weaving section in that institution, and he is looking forward to that, even as are the instructors at the college where he is recognized as one of the country's eminent craftsmen.

A letter from Martha Robinson announces she will be arriving next week, and I am sure she will be a great help.



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early Saturday morning, bringing a Mr. Dufour with her, and these other people she mentioned in an earlier letter, as to whose identity I am not quite certain. I believe it is Mr. Dufour who is the master critic or some such on the Picayune, and it is he who is offering to give me a hand with the Melfosse manuscript. I wish I had a few moments to catch my breath before Rudolph leaves and they arrive, but that seems impossible, and so I shall do what I can to make the most of it.

The Matchitoches Times has asked for a conference this week about the anniversary number thing that is now approaching printing stage. I haven't finished my script as yet, but I shall try to work the conference in while Rudolph is at the college, and perhaps I can dash off the article between now and Monday. At the same time, I am having a bit of dings about the Matchitoches plate and the Audubon one. I have completed my sketch on the latter to my satisfaction and shall ask Nina to touch it up for me when I have completed the balance of the Town of Matchitoches design, so that both may be put into production about the same time. I am in a vast hurry for the Audubon one to get to rolling so it may be at Oakley as early as possible to catch the pilgrims in that neighborhood.

A letter from Mrs. Campbell brought the news of Mr. Campbell's sudden death, - heart trouble, I believe. I think I may have mentioned they telephoned me for a little chat on Saturday night, a week back. I believe he died the next day.

A further roundabout report concerning the Briarwood set up indicates that "ele Virginia" has been in bed for ten days, and that she has there remained, perhaps, on two counts, -

first, - because she is sore and banged up, and, secondly, - because she is usually very shy and the object of the RA. H. I. Special is heading from New Orleans, and that it is expected to arrive back here along about Sunday afternoon. If I can set hand to it, - what with all the hurly-burly about, I shall enclose a card from la Montespan, written, apparently, for the sole purpose of flaunting the fact that she eventually made Dallas regardless. Apparently there are hurly-burles and hurly-burles, and I am thankful that the ones that momentarily present are of the same variety that keep other people going around in circles.

My correspondence has reached a low ebb, but that is alright and I shall get back on the ball shortly. I think I missed the postman on Tuesday, he being ahead of schedule, but I reckon that brought two items in the same mail which turned out alright....

5907 Dona 1/2

Friday, January 30th, 1953.

#### Memorandum:

Just a brief note tonight while Rudolph doeses and while I catch my breath from a busy go-round that included a trip to town today. It's odd, the months and years that go by without me setting foot in town, and then to make it twice in the same week.

I wanted Rudolph to see an exhibit at the college of weaving stuff and I made an appointment for the Director up yonder to receive him. While he was thus engaged, I had an opportunity to attend to several little items in town and thus everybody was entra ced with the way the day panned out.

At the Chamber of Commerce they told me that correspondence on their part with New Orleans had bumped into the same snag about the Louis XIV statue, - the French Government awaiting an approval on the part of the Louisiana Commission to signify its approval of the thing for Matchitoches while New Orleans, having received a grant of State money, was making plans to expend about all of it in the Crescent City, with the rest of the State getting nothing out of the funds. It's the old political game with Mr. Kane thrown in for good measure, I guess.

But on other fronts things are rocking along alright and as the maganelias are just about at perfection and the narcissus and jonquills at their loveliest, it is perhaps well that the Martha Robinson party should arrive on the morrow.

The man with the injured back, - on the truck the other day with Peter and Log, died early this morning, leaving a large family, so I guess Madam Coombs had better get her Welfare Department going in that direction. She herself plans to leave for New Orleans on the 12th of the month, and I shall try to get everything smoothed out in the case of the widow and orphans long before then.

I shall write no more for this sitting. Porgive my brevity, but you understand.....



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not able to get the statue for New Orleans, he was able to block  
approval of the statue by the Board. But the matter will not be settled by his efforts in  
that direction, for time is on our side, and if we don't get it  
in 1953, we may get it at some other time.

I sent the manuscript back to New Orleans with my visitors

Memorandum: I am going to have a meeting with the Board

You got cheated in the last go-round, and this one  
is likely to be such a hodge-podge that it will be little  
better.

The truth is that I have thought of so many things I wanted to  
chat about during the past several days but have had such little  
leisure to jot down any of the rigamarole that I am likely  
to skip the most of it or repeat myself over and over again, --  
or both.

Martha Robinson came on schedule Saturday morning, just  
as Rudolph was leaving. Mr. Dufour couldn't come with her, as  
he is flattened out by the flu, but the Sam Wilsons did  
come and I liked them very much.

We chatted at Yucca until noon, hoping the sun would  
come out so the Wilsons could get some pictures, but instead  
of sun we got rain. But that was alright and we drove to  
Natchitoches, -- imagine me being in that place so frequently, for  
lunch, and then explored the Jeyous Coast in the rain on our  
way back, -- Cashmere, Beaufort, Oakland and so on.

It seems that Mr. and Sam Wilson are both on some board that  
has to do with the Louisiana Purchase business. I think Sam  
is somehow associated with Richard Koch, the New Orleans architect.  
Sam also seems to have close relations with the Louisiana  
State Park Commission and I was able to get in a few swift and sure  
good words for Mrs. Sterling. I wonder if her name is spelled  
Stirling, of which point I had better be sure before the  
plate gets fired, -- the Audubon one, I mean.

And then there is the matter of the Louisiana plate for  
the Purchase business. I learned from Sam that somebody has  
commissioned someone to do one for the Board, and so I guess  
I had better not dabble in that department on a State wide  
basis, but rather reserve my fire for Louis XIV if and when....  
They mentioned Harnett Kane, and remarked upon how busy he is,  
stickin his finger in every pie. I gathered through indirect  
reference to him, that he has been influencing the Board to insist  
on the celebration being centered on the Crescent City and the Louis  
XIV statue being set up there. It will be interesting to see  
if he succeeds which I have a feeling he will not, although he may, if



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not able to get the statue for New Orleans, be able to block approval of its appearance in Natchitoches approved by the Board. But that matter will not be settled by his efforts in that direction, for time is on our side, and if we don't get it in 1953, we may get it at some other time.

I sent the manuscript back to New Orleans with my visitors to pass along to Mr. Lafour to have a look at it. I learned from Martha and the Wilsons that Tess Crager considers Bob Tallant her particular "fair haired boy" and has been the power that has pushed his books into print through the houses with which she is associated. As Tess, it is said, likes the Tallant type of treatment of literature, it is quite natural she should like sponsoring him and frowning on manuscripts that are more concerned with the more positive side of plantation life anywhere, and especially in Louisiana.

On Little River this afternoon, they buried in St. Augustine's graveyard the man who got his back broke on Tuesday in front of the Melrose store. They laid him to rest along side the fresh grave of his mama who was buried there on Tuesday. For forty years on end the family had lived atop the Indian mound in sight of St. Augustine's, so that mother and son have rounded out their cycle in a comparatively limited area, and somehow in spite of all the far flung travels of most people, it somehow seems pleasant to know they came to rest in such a place so close to the place where they had dwelt and so near in time to each other's passing.

There were quite a few pilgrims today, the people from the Ford Foundation arriving on schedule at 8:30 this morning. The weather was clear and as a result of yesterday's rain, lots of petals from the Chinese magnolias, floated like like ivory pink boats on the surface of the iron pot, and it was as pretty and romantic and slightly sad as was Marie Antoinette's little farm before its restoration.

It will surprise you not at all to learn that I haven't done five cents worth of reading during the past week. But while I miss the voice of the reading machine, I don't begrudge the time spent in other lines of endeavor, and especially "the elopement" as Carolyn styled our trip to Oakley, my trip to town with Rudolph, and the conference with Martha and the Wilsons. I am glad, too, that I could effect the completion of the Audubon-Oakley and the town of Natchitoches designs, save for one or two insignificant details in spite of all the road running, and except for gardening, pilgrims and catching up on correspondence this week, I shall probably get caught up on a couple of "literary evenings" too. ....

if you are interested in the life of the people of the South, you will find this book of interest.

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Monday, February 2nd, 1953.

Memorandum

Locally the ground hog saw his shadow from sun up to sun down, and if he glanced at his thermometer, he noticed it was too warm to be wearing his fur coat. The promise is for warmer weather on the morrow, if the chances be tuned in on the Weather Bureau.

As for other evidences that Spring is here, even though the ground hog shadow points to winter, is a glory of pear blossoms along the Arenbourg drive. They looked so pretty in the dawn's early light against the clear blue of a cloudless sky. Surely it is too early for an uninterrupted Spring, even though the suggestion of summer is all over the place.

The California travelers returned last night, and everyone seems enchanted with the outing. The Melrose gardens are so pretty, I reckon they found the sight of them a sort of seal on the final lap of their journey.

The District Attorney of Natchitoches Parish is legal adviser of the Valley Electric Company and he and Mrs. Hughes were among those making the California trip. Parenthetically Mrs. Hughes is a sister of Miss Julie Prudhomme, both being granddaughters of the diarist, Estan Prudhomme. A couple of years ago Mr. and Mrs. Hughes went to Cleveland for some such place at this season of the year on one of the Rural Electrification junkets. A cold snap rolled over the South during their absence, and all the water pipes in their house burst. This year they took no such chance, in fact they not only cut off the water outside their house but also shut off the pipes inside the house to give any water that might be an opportunity to expand at will during their absence without damaging the pipes. As you may have already anticipated, some helpful soul, noticing the water to the house disconnected, corrected the matter by turning it on. The drains inside the house were not equal to the task of taking off the water as fast as the incoming pipes delivered it. The net result was that for days the water gushed forth madly and it was only after things started floating



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around inside the house and the water had been cascading down the steps and through window sills that the situation was noticed. What a business to return to. Next year they will perhaps compromise and not absent themselves from home during the calendar months of winter.

Luther Harrison passed this way this noon and remained for dinner. He had been spending the week end with his sister, Mrs. Gordon Randolph, on Kateland Plantation down at Colfax. He said the Rands were there last evening for cards. They think Mrs. White cannot possibly survive many days. --a thought which has been dominant in the minds of everyone for months.

Celeste brought me some tea from San Francisco's China Town. I am "studying about" brewing myself a cup later tonight after the mail has been attended to and the reading machine is in order for lolling me to sleep. I mention this because only today did it ever occur to me that I might make use of a leaf from the lemon tree, growing hard by the front gallery here at Yucca. I folded a lemon leaf three or four times over and over today and is of bay. I am wondering what the result may be like and assume it will not be very satisfactory since nobody ever seems to use lemon leaf instead of a lemon slice to step up the flavoring of anything. I shall attach a leaf to this memo, so you may crush it between your fingers to determine if any lemon flavor remains after four or five days, following its removal from the stem on which it grows.

To hand in the morning post came the box of cookies which Daisy in the Dell has been promising for some time. They are very nice but have a subtle flavoring which I cannot determine either as to its precise nature or the intention of the sender. It is exceedingly faint but seems to be a cross between peppermint and menthal, if you can imagine, and I'm wondering if the flavoring is actually in the cookies through intent, for if it merely seeped into the pastry from some bit of wrapping paper surrounding the gift. Menthalated cake or cookies has a ring of the more novel things I have stumbled over in the culinary arts, but knowing Daisy in the Dell as we do, I reckon we shouldn't be surprised at any such unexpected twist.

Come to think of it, lemon leaves in my tea and menthalated cookies really ought to do something wonderful for me as a combination, and I'd better get my mail attended to before I attack that combination.....

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Tuesday, February 2nd, 1953.

Memorandum:

The weather continues too fair and too warm for this time of the year. The banana plants which I had moved yesterday from the front of the gallery to the curves approaching the pet, decided the move must have been a sign of Spring and accordingly jumped a couple of inches in new growth during the night. Jack Frost will be around to set them back a bit one of these nights, --or "cook" them all together, but until that time they seem as intent on growth as though it were summer.

But one word employed in the above paragraph reminds me that I perhaps failed to mention I have a new pet and apparently have lost an old one. Fran was frisking about as busy as a bee last Tuesday but then joined Celeste's big Yellow Persian to "go visitin'" or some such. A couple of days later the Yellow Persian came back, but Fran never has put in an accounting for the disappearance and remains completely faded from the local picture. I shall continue to hold the thought that she may return, but the time element seems to suggest I shall not see her again.

As for the new member of the family, it is a big, short haired dog, about the color of a camel's hair coat, and is said to be a Catahula Scout, --whatever that is. I guess he is a little larger than a Police dog.

His recommendation stems from the fact that he is rough on hogs, and since we have been troubled too much by invasions by the latter, the new dog was presented to me since a domicile at Yucca might afford him easy access to invading swine, no matter from which direction. Remembering the good old Homer and his tales of the mis-adventures of the Greeks on their endless travels between Troy and home, I thought the name of Circe, as an expert in the hog business, would be just the proper appellation. Imagine my disappointment when I learned that my new pet's name is just plain Jack.



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A letter from Mrs. Stirling gave me the names of several people who have much to say as to whether she will remain as permanent Curator at Oakley, and I knocked off a flock of letters to each, -Governor Kennon, Commissioner Wells and so on. I made them rather casual, so far as the Curator business was concerned, thinking as propaganda for a desired end, it might be as effective if the restoration job and the curator were all lumped into the same category with ample prize for the work of restoration that is going forward at the Audubon Memorial.

I experienced such a curious sensation the other day when on the margin of the Mississippi River that I may have mentioned it in a previous Memo, but I shall run the risk of repeating myself, the strange feeling remains so vividly in my mind. After driving on to the flat boat which serves as the ferry, --the thing being propelled by a steamboat alongside the flat, we sat for some time in the car, the whole flat being gently swayed by the current of the Mississippi while the boat awaited the arrival of other fares. After perhaps half an hour, as I glanced straight ahead, just after a tug had passed at right angles to us, I was almost startled to see what appeared to be the whole West bank of the Mississippi heading straight at us. The West bank of the river rises abruptly some 50 or 60 feet at Bayou Sarah -- St. Francisville and is encumbered with masses of willows and underbrush. You can readily imagine what a curious sensation was produced by this vast land mass moving rapidly toward one. What had happened, of course, was the fact that without the usual warning toot by the departing ferry, our boat had slid off the West bank without fanfare, and because of the mild undulations we had felt during the time we were moored to the bank, we had not noticed the swells from the river as we had glided across it, so that we actually were approaching the far shore while still under the illusion that we hadn't moved from where we had been tied up on the West bank. If I ever experience a nightmare wherein I remain stationary while great land masses move as to engulf me, I shall know where to trace that twist of the imagination.

If you chanced to hear Fibber and Molley tonight, you probably were as impressed as I was they announced that tonight's broadcast was in honor of the R. E. A. convention, "now being held in San Francisco". If J. K. chanced to be listening, it must have come as something as a surprise to him, too. I find this an excellent example of how misleading a transcribed program can be and while in this instance, it didn't matter, in other situations it might make a difference. But I must up and look after Jack who is howling for food, I reckon, or perhaps a passing hog has excited him, and thence to bed....

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5914

Wednesday, February 4th, 1953.

Memorandum,

The summer weather continues and the promise for the morrow is more summer.

A half dozen letters came in the day's post but none of them, I think of any interest, and the secretaries all got lost, which therefore makes scant difference.

It seemed to me that yesterday was one of my busier days and yet I found myself sufficiently awake when my desk was cleared to indulge in a bit of reading.

Fortunately, I don't seem to have anything of any particular interest at the moment, and so I can now nod a little in between pages and probably miss but little of interest. At the moment there is a thing called by Maude van Cortlandt Oakes, who seems to be a Manhattan gal who simply had to take herself miles into the interior of Guatemala to spend a couple of years studying the folk ways of the Indians. I think the book is entitled, "Beyond the Windy Place", or some such thing.

The book is alright if one is interested in Indians which I don't seem to be. Miss Oakes seems to have run into a rugged environment which perhaps didn't surprise her since by some chance phrase, one gathers she had been tangled up with Navajo Indians before heading South for the Guatemalan scene. Perhaps my chief interest in the book lies in the fact that I am curious to find out what kind of a person should be like to experience an impulse to spend a couple of years in such a situation, and I suppose there are as many people who ponder and puzzle as to how it is I can like such a place as this bend of the river.

Don Worsley called me this evening to ask the name of the people who bought Afton Villa two or three months ago. I hadn't heard the place had been sold, I shall inquire.



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from Mrs. Stirling. Don said he had a fine piano, -- a Paris make of the 1840's, having no metal parts, which has a marvelous tone and which, since the Worsleys already have a couple of such ante-bellum bits of furniture, scarcely have need of another. It seems the piano belonged, oddly enough, to Julie Prudhomme, sister of the diarist, and had been in the Jean Baptiste Prudhomme home where the Worsleys lived for a while, facing the river in Natchitoches, for about 92 years. When the Prudhommess sold the house a long time back they moved the piano into the attic with a view to bringing it forth some more convenient time, and now none of the descendants want a piano and so Don bought it. It seems remarkable how so much furniture survives from generation to generation and how often, as in the present case, descendants who have ample room to house such pieces, are quite indifferent to their intrinsic beauty or sentimental appeal. I believe Don said he expects to sell it for a hundred and fifty dollars which, in this day of inflated prices, seem modest enough. I expect if one, not ~~very~~ caring to preserve the old piece as a musical instrument, could have it converted into a lovely desk, the cost of which would probably be less than one would pay for an ordinary modern oak desk.

On Monday I moved some banana plants and found it necessary to cut some of the stalks down to within a couple of feet from the ground. I suppose the stalks were about 5 inches in diameter, and the plant looked dormant enough, but what with Monday night being warm, the center of the stalks began growing, and in 12 hours had stuck up an ivory center stalk about 3 inches in height and the size of the average size water pipe. There were evidences of the other bananas putting forth genary but I was astonished at the driving force manifested by this growth of the central stem in the span of a single night.

I am glad to report that while I still have a couple of important excerpts to do for the Natchitoches Times article, I at last can see how the thing is going to pan out and so hit at a certain point. The 40 odd pages that will complete the thing will probably be pruned to about half that number, which will suit me and the reader, too, I suppose. I understand there is already an absence of space for half the stuff already rigged up for the issue, and the Melrose stuff can certainly stand a heap of cutting. But now I must get at the business and give you a breaf er.....

5916

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Thursday, February 5th, 1953.

Memorandum:

May I tell you that the anniversary number of the Chatlesten Courier arrived today and that I have had a grand time turning through it, finding myself delighted with all the things it seems to hold and slightly on the impatient side to get to exploring some of the printed material. There is a chance I may have just such an opportunity on Saturday and in the mean time I am digesting the pictures and larger headlines as an appetizer. It is so kind of you to have thus remembered me and as I digest the contents, I shall be thinking of you with each line.

I picked up a bit of information today at the store which was quite unexpected. A man, having something to do about insurance covering the truck in such the people were riding last week, -- one to his doom, was waiting to see J. A. When I entered the store, he spoke to me by name, saying he was from Alexandria and that he had been glancing over a book at the library there this morning, thinking of me as he did so and finding himself surprised that it wasn't dedicated to me, since it was compiled as a direct result of the good work I had done in Alexandria a year or two ago when I harangued the crowd regarding their heirlooms and especially their family portraits. He said his wife had attended a meeting of the D. A. R. on that occasion, and as nearly all the members of the Colonial Dames attended that meeting, they were impressed by my message and in their next meeting they had decided to gather together all the portraits of the founders of Rapides Parish and by adding appropriate texts, make a permanent record in book form. He was under the impression I had been advised of the plan at the time and it was his understanding that the Colonial Dames had intended dedicating the book to me.

I thought that very nice of them, even though I was never advised of their plans and the dedication somehow got lost in the making. The important thing is that at least one segment of the early history of Rapides has thus been secured and perhaps this initial effort will inspire other societies to go and do likewise. I shall find out the name of the book and will refer to it again in some subsequent sitting.



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The weather continues warm, with a fairly brisk wind from the Gulf blowing all day. Clouds started gathering 1 to in the afternoon and it seems reasonable to assume the Weather Bureau was correct in predicting "widely scattered showers" before morning.

Before folding up my beard last night, I felt the inspiration to sort out a heap of papers and to throw out a lot of no account stuff. In the latter category, I must have inadvertently included some trash which represented some of the manuscript for the Natchitoches Times, for I find part of it missing tonight, although I have searched thoroughly through the stuff that survived the "clean-up". But I shall have little difficulty in doing the pages over again, since I am under the impression I can probably do better on the second sitting than on the first, but I must confess I should never have bothered to have tried any improvement by wilfully destroying the initial stuff, had I had my good sense about me.

But there's no great loss without some small gain, in proof whereof I set forth the fact that in straightening my papers, I discovered a letter, written last week during the social hurly-burly, which somehow didn't get mailed. It was to Rock Hall and contained what seemed to me some important instructions regarding the final finer points covering the execution of the African House. I hope Rock Hall has not gone ahead with the job without awaiting the instructions, for there's no great rush about this particular design anyway and one or two points covered in my letter seem important to me.

I am wondering what your opinion is regarding the photogenic virtues of the original design versus the finished plate, so far as newspaper reproduction is concerned. The design of Grandpere, as photographed from the sketch, strikes me as being unusually clear and I am wondering if in the case of the somewhat busy design for the Town of Natchitoches, we would do better to concentrate on the sketch rather than the plate. I don't suppose it really matters much either way, and it is a bit premature to give the matter much thought anyway. But eventually it seemed to me a good idea to have the Natchitoches Times carry a cut of the plate and a brief article concerning the new items appearing in the Cane River series. I should think early in May or late in September might be the ideal time. The town plate would enjoy graduation and summer trade, the African House, released in the autumn, the Christmas business. Won't you thin so....

5918

5918

Friday, February 6th, 1953.

Memorandum:

A nice half inch of rain last night and the pears lovelier than ever. A deepening green is manifesting itself in the live oaks and unless a cold spell comes before long, the lawn mowers will have to start turning.

Your friend, Beth Williams Cloutier, came to see me this morning and remained until noon. She wanted to show me the family coat-of-arms and genealogical table on which she is laboring. Like so many people to whom genealogy should be a harmless pastime, with one probably she is demonstrating what was probably always latent, that she is a snob. For the life of me, I can't imagine what there is to be especially proud of in some of the immediate branches of her own tree, but it seems that the more she dwells on the fact that she had a flock of Grandpas, the more snobbish she gets. She seems to feel she can "tell all" to me, supposing that I as an outsider would naturally incline in her direction. I found this especially funny when she got to preening her feathers and pointing out how superior her Williams family is to Ours family. That, surely, would be a matter of opinion and most of the opinion would incline in Ours favor.

I may have mentioned the Cloutiers have recently paid three hundred fifteen thousand dollars for the plantation up the road that once belonged to Aunt Benjamin and later to the Sam Robins. Three hundred thousand dollars sounds like lots of money and I hope her husband has better business sense than Beth has family.

And I had a telephone from Miss Sally's son, Mat Hertzog, this afternoon, asking me if I had any little history of Magnolia, as he was planning to write a little one. I told him I did not but that I would be glad to pass along what particulars I had such as the original grantees, the Buards, and how it passed to the Leecomptes and thence to the Hertzogs, but he broke in to say that I was mistaken about the Buards, for according to his abstract, dated from 1835, the place was confirmed to the Leecomptes, and therefore they must have been the first owners. And of course he is just



as crack-pot in making such an assumption as he can possibly be. I could have told him that his grandfather tried to cheat Mrs. Alphonse Prudhomme, born Lecompte, out of her Buard share of Magnolia, and kept her waiting until after the Civil War when the Courts made the old man cough up the Buard share, but nobody likes to hear their grandpa called a scoundrel, I suppose, and since Mat had riled me out on my first step, I thought I might as well let the whole thing drop. I suppose Mat may be writing up the Magnolia story for the Natchitoches Times anniversary number, and if so, that is one bit of history I should like to read.

Betty Regard Courage's husband, Keith, dropped by for a minute this afternoon, en route from Dallas to New Iberia and mentioned one thing that interested me much although it was of no importance. Perston or whatever that youth's name was in New Iberia, whose papa gave me a thousand dollars or so just before the son took off for Paris where he went to spend December, well, the same youth returned home and reported a marvelous trip. It seems he was in the war and had something to do as liaison officer for some General at the time of the invasion and sometimes the liaison officer softened things for the inhabitants by his translations, and the people in some little town near Paris, subsequently learning of the youth's services, were vastly pleased when they learned he was going to be in France in holiday time. From some little town, they sent representatives to invite him to come to see them and when the car arrived, the place was all dark, but at a given signal, the whole place was flooded with lights, a little girl presented a bouquet and the Mayor made a speech, --and Keith asked him what he did, and Preston said:

"Well, naturally, I cried."

But it seems there was a gala evening in the little town and the youth had a grand time, and so his leave-taking for New Iberia was almost as remarkable and touching as had been his leave-taking for Paris a month earlier. I mention a l this because I feel you will feel as I do that there is something heartening about such marvelous doings in a world that too often has sadder tales to relate.

And now I must roll up my sleeves and get to work.  
I shall be hoping your week end is a nice quiet one....

Sunday, February 8th, 1953

Memorandum:

The weather continues fair. Vegetation continues foolish for it is sticking its neck out all over the place and it doesn't seem possible we can get through the month without at least one substantial frost. But so far, so good and sufficient unto the day is the sunshine thereof. into misquote the GoodBook.

Along about first dark a lady appeared on my gallery. It was Irma Somperya-Willard. I think I hadn't seen her since October. She brought a bottle of some kind of dry wine, perhaps a Grave, which was excellent of quality but not particularly appealing to my taste.

As head of the Art Commission, she seems to get around the country at a great rate, not only within the confines of her own province of Louisiana but as far afield as Massachusetts for example. I think she is a good person for the job so far, at least, as her genuine appreciation of Art is concerned, and therefore probably makes a much more impressive contribution to peoplar developme of art in public schools and clubs and societies she addresses than would a political appointee like Huey P. Long's sister. --Olive Long Cooper, - who continues to dominate the Art department of Northwestern State College.

Irma apparently has never learned the advantage of writing letters but perhaps her far flung personal contacts are sufficient to obviate the need of the human touch that comes through correspondence. Still, she seems to like dropping in to see me now and then to discuss certain aspects of her sales campaign in putting over Art in public and private institutions and it is always a pleasure to chat with her on such subjects.

I know not how long she remained, but it was considerably after second dark that she made a move toward departing, and



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as she wanted to make a little call across the fence, I thought it well she head out. Everyone there was in various stages of beard-folding, but as Irma is an old friend, a pajama party didn't matter. I simply handed her in and departed. I know not how long she lingered. I realize, so far as her visits to me are concerned, that probably a large part of the impulse stems from the fact that it was a yucca she spent her honeymoon and I hav n't a doubt that it is this consideration that is the primary factor in impelling her to return again and again.

I think I have mention the law firm of Watson and Williams, --the Williams being M. B., and the Watson being "Cousin Arthur", --a grandchild of old Joe Henry by his second marriage. Well, Cousin Arthur, now in his 50's, was a polite victim when a child and although his crippled legs give him support or at least provide a certain balance when he is on his crutches, he cannot walk, save with the support of his crutches and he cannot get in or out of cars or up and down steps by himself.

At supper tonight, J. A. said th t on Saturday night Cousin Arthur and a number of people were at the new Redoubt Club down in the woods of the Monette's ferry region and, that the man who was carrying Cousin Arthur up the rather steep flight of steps, slipped and dropped his burden, and that the fall broke one of Cousin Arthur's legs. It seems odd, somehow, that a leg that is scant account to begin with should have t remain in a cast for the next couple of months, but Cousin Arthur, a man of most enervating personality, w ll be able to bark out orders from his home and I am quite sure his business will in no way suffer from his absence at his office. Oddly enough, I have never met Cousin Arthur. I believe, although he has twice that I know of been to Melrose when I was here, too. I think his personality a very aggressive one and I am as delighted to admire his career from afar. He has a wife and a couple of children or so and is said to make scads of money, al- though, according to some reports, more sedate clients of his law concern prefer doing their business with E. B.

On Saturday, I had an opportunity to send the Melrose manuscript in to the Times, and although I was shame-faced about its appearance, I sent it along regardless, with a note to Charles saying he could tear out as many Exerpts as he pleased. If you will mention is you have in mind using this issue of the Times for scrapbook or otherwise, I shall send you as many more than one issue as you please when it appears. Mine has been a pleasant week end. I hope you were equally lucky.....

0302

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Monday, February 9th, 1953.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Wednesday letter in today's post.

It goes without saying that I am genuinely sorry to learned the ordeal through which you have had to go. I so much hope the week-end examinations provided information for proper and immediate correctives. So often you have heard me remark before that my particular sympathy in certain cases has gone as much to the nurse as the patient.

Often I think the days that are taken up with minor concerns can result in bringing on as much fatigue as those that are more strenuous physically. I am hoping you will not attempt correspondence until things get back to something suggesting normalcy.

My own program turned out sufficiently harly-burly with nothing of any particular interest to add any rest for the people I had to bother with, although everyone was pleasant enough.

This morning Mrs. Hunter Pierson whose husband is a nephew of Miss Sally, came up from Alexandria unannounced. She is the wife of a young attorney and they incline toward the intellectual persuasion of Alexandria society. With her she brought a youth from Manhattan, who seems to be a writer of books but I don't recall his name and I don't remember anything about him except that he seemed rather good looking, well groomed and slightly on the pretentious side, but perhaps the latter quality was induced by some defense mechanism, against what I couldn't image. Mrs. Hunter explained that she had brought the gentleman to seeme and asked me not to tell Mr. Maganella that they had been to Melrose as they were not stopping there. They seemed very interested in the portraits, but merely as po traits and not as historical hairlooms. I never did figure out precisely why they came but perhaps they used the excuse of calling on me to get into the big rod for a bit of a frolic.

Mrs. Charles Wood had asked last week if she might come down



this afternoon at 2. I had a couple of people working in the gardens and I had neglected to take off my long beard, thinking I would get a breather at 1:30 when I got the men back at their labors. The lady arrived at one o'clock, however, and while an hour in advance is sometimes better than an hour behind, still on occasion one isn't much better than the other. I think the lady wanted me to give her some ideas on some speech she is preparing but I was so bored, I fear I wasn't of much help. She went into some detail telling me about the aspects of an old plantation in South Carolina called Hampton-on-the-Santee, and I didn't even bother to mention that I had never heard tell of the place.

It was all one of those kind of days.

Mildred Cunningham telephoned this morning to ask if she could bring some Washington people down later in the week to see the Chinese magnolias, and some local doctors had asked if they might come too.

She also asked if anyone had called my attention to the review in the Shreveport Sunday paper, -- the Times, -- of James Aswell's latest novel, -- "The Brides and the Bees". She said the review remarked that the "birds and bees" stopped short at the title, -- and she wasn't entirely certain just what that meant. She regretted the fact that a person who can write as well as James can should throw away his stuff in such messy sex pieces.

J. H. saidhe talked with Joe Henry last night and the latter said he had recently heard from Pat who had breakfasted the other day in London, lunched in Rome and dined in Athens, so one takes it he is getting about. Pat had let it be known to this father that he intends marrying the Washington or West Virginia girl who was down here when Pat was here. I think this suits J. H. not at all. He indicates his lack of enthusiasm only by saying the girl looks so much older than Pat.

So things unravel at this end of the line. I shall be holding the thought that a season of better rocking lies just ahead in your immediate neighborhood.....

Tuesday, February 10th, 1953.

Memorandum

Tonight I ought to get caught up on my reading, for there's an incessant electrical display going on outside accompanied by an insignificant drizzle. Fibber and Molly will sound like Chinese firecrackers and so I can turn to my reading machine which isn't effected by static. It is true, of course, that I haven't anything much to read, but perhaps I can catch a glimpse of Constantinople around the year 500, -- a time and place pretty vague in my mind, and see what Theodosia and Justinian are up to, for there seems to be a volume to hand on that subject.

Before the rains came during the afternoon, I had been able to knock off a bit of gardening which ought to keep me on the jump, what with everything getting out of hand in the vegetation department. The butterfly lilies are up 2 or 3 inches and the peppies look like young oceans of lettuce - their pale green so strikingly in contrast to the sweet clover surrounding them.

A slight interruption of an hour intervenes. A daddling secretary showed up, followed by the Dark Duke, coming to pick up a package of cookies for the little ones. The Dark Duke has the same influenza that seems to be making its rounds again in this area. Aurellia and Andy both recovered last week but are flattened out again this week. Madam Regard doesn't seem to run a temperature but her sniffles have put her in the bed again. Whenever she is well par, I incline to attribute her condition to an over-abundance of road-running, but that is probably because I am a sloth. So turns the health wheel, and I pause to knock wood since I seem to have been pretty lucky thus far this season.



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Celeste showed me some pictures in the February Cosmopolitan illustrating an article on Dr. Albert Schweitzer. She regretted that lack of time prevented her from reading it to me, as it is said to be very good. She asked me if I had ordered more than one copy of the anniversary number of the Watchtowers Times, hastening to add that she was quite positive that none of the Henrys would be interested, and mentioning the General and his wife in particular. Personally, I think Joe might enjoy seeing the issue, although I suppose Celeste is quite right about the others. I think friend Postell would probably enjoy seeing one and I haven't a doubt I shall think of others before the piece appears.

I am under the impression the Joyous Coast will figure prominently in the issue and Ora told me on the telephone yesterday that Mat Hertzog had been to R. B.'s office in search of data for his article on Magnolia.

I wonder if I ever mentioned how the first Cane River Hertzog made the social grade. He was J. F. H., according to the family as being a resident of Alcace but according to his marriage ban, a communicant of some parish at Bordeaux, France. He was said by the Madam to have been a pedlar and according to the Prudhommes, the Antoine Prudhommes frowned on said pedlar of the high road when he made eyes at their daughter. But the young lady and her suitor circumvented her parents by arranging to have J. F. H. enter her room at night and jump into her bed, with both of them screaming and making a great racket. The parents rushed in in consternation, and finding things as they were, insisted that J. F. H. marry the girl, which worked out just as the young couple had planned. The home place was above Madam Aubin-Rockque's on the West bank of the river where Bill Jones now lives. All this might make entertaining reading in the Watchtowers paper if properly presented, but something tells me there would be a wave of deaths in the Hertzog ménage if this segment of their story as early arrivals on Cane River ever got into print.

It was a son of the original Hertzog-Prudhomme who became Mat's grandpa, and surely such information ought to brighten up family tree reading, but that, I suppose, might be classed as a matter of opinion. No wonder the rustling of a breeze through some branches of the family tree sets all the lesser leaves agog.....

5926

Wednesday, February 11th, 1953.

Memorandum: I have not a doubt it was loads of fun doing the synchronization business, but such lines of endeavor, coupled with the fractious cows and the stricken pater leaves scant time or energy, I expect, for other lines of endeavor.

The enclosures are the thing, and although they are of no particular interest, the one from Carolyn quite aside from the family and stock problems enumerated, indicate in part just how it is the magazine articles never get to the boiling stage.

With cattle prices dropping and the fees of veterinarians or is it veterinararians hogging right along, plus a scarcity of feed as a consequence of last year's drought, the cattle business, as operated by the little fellow, presents a squeeze that is going to rob a lot of people like little Miss Carolyn not only of their cattle but their ranches as well. If she were wise, I think she would drop her farm and stock operations like a hot potato, remove her farm, except for the residence and wood acreage, and at least have her property if not any profit when she got through the year. But apparently the operational end represents some need and so she will have to plod along, learning the hard way, and I regret to say, losing all.

It all seems so clear to me, and yet I could be so completely wrong, but at the same time, I feel the whole thing is none of my business and should offer some advice only when called upon, and by then the advice will not be newsworthy some old, old friend of Carolyn's, like Helen, might attempt to persuade Carolyn to pull out from under the load the ranch imposes, but Helen, although definitely on the mend, is carrying enough on her own shoulders. Besides, it is quite possible that Carolyn is one of those noble souls who will always provide herself with impedimenta that will be impossible to manage, and perhaps the tape recording business of last week is but a miniature pattern concerning secondary matters, such as the final finishing of the texts for the articles and the development of the illustrations, -- shunted aside momentarily, to



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undertake something which isn't of primary importance to her general scheme of things to begin with. Perhaps all her undertakings on a scale of years conforms to this most recent one covering but a few days -- and if so, then she would perhaps do as well to be loaded down with a money-losing ranch as some other project which in the nature of her own make up would jockey itself into something equally unsuccessful from a monetary standpoint.

And while speaking of people in Texas, I want to pass along a bit of news which Carolyn spoke of in confidence to me when here. Although Helen doesn't know it, it is supposed by friends, including, I believe, some of her physicians, that Helen's accident may have been caused by knock-out drops, administered to her I suppose, while in Austin, and taking effect on her as she hurried back to Waco. It seems there were two people, somebody named Joe and another named Lill, whom nobody in Waco knew but somehow were mixed up in the accident, -- perhaps they were driving just behind Helen's car when it turned over. Be that as it may, these uncertain characters called on Helen during her hospitalization until the editor of the Waco papers, a friend of Helen's, was advised by her physicians to advise the couple to pay no more calls on Helen, either at the hospital while there or after she returned to her home, to visit her there. They complied with the advice, and of course thereby seemed to give credence to the suspicions that they were not above meriting suspicion. I don't recall any

of the details, except that everything in Helen's purse, picked up at the place of the accident, was intact. -- keys, pen, pencils, compacts and the Lord knows what all, -- except her bill folder. Circumstances prevented Carolyn from going into the matter further at the time she began telling me of this peculiar story, and perhaps from her or Lucile I may later learn additional particulars. At best, it is dreadful to think that anyone so kind as Helen should have her life nearly snuffed out by the inhuman chicanery of such an outrageous couple.

Last night's drizzle continued throughout today and while it will be much cooler tonight, there's no chance of a frost and higher thermometers are promised for the morrow.

One more thing about Carolyn's letter that held a humor she little suspected when she penned it. Near the beginning, as I recall, she thanks me for pleasant times at Melrose, Oakley and points between. My secretary, in line with local pronunciation read it "puts in between".....

2382

[encl.]

5928

Thursday, February 12th, 1953.

Memorandum:  
How nice to find your Saturday letter and the larger envelope containing the printed material in today's post.

I sincerely appreciate your kindness in keeping me advised of the situation and it goes without saying that I am holding the thought your own vitality isn't being sapped to the point of complete enervation by all the additional demands on your strength. Perhaps there will be an interim of quiet on the domestic hearth and although this letter will probably reach you only after that period has passed, I am hoping the little space of quiet may be sufficient to give you an opportunity to get caught up on doing nothing, for a brief spell. It is unnecessary for me to point out that I shall completely understand any silence that may ensue, and I pray that you will make the most of the peace obtaining at the moment and that you will not undertake any pen pushing until such a time as things get back to a more normal routine.

This morning I had an extra half hour which gave me a chance to read some of the material in the Manhattan anniversary number and I found some of the data most delightfully presented. I am keeping the issue here on my desk on the chance that I may get another break on the morrow when I shall proceed further in the publications. It is so kind of you to take the trouble to supply all this material, and doubly kind at a time when so many demands have kept everything in such a hurly-burly.

Today's mail was fairly heavy, and one of the enclosures suggest how my afternoon panned out. The other speaks for itself. I must write Madam Lake a letter tonight, and another to Mrs. Campbell.

As today was, cloudless, it seemed a perfect time for



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movie making and so the Kysers, in response to a telephone from me, rounded up a technician or two and a couple of nice young ladies and a flock of pictures in color were taken, starting with Lestan greeting the young ladies at the front gate, proceeding to the big house, doing a round of Dr. Miller's cabin where the magnolias were especially pretty, then some shots of the African house, and finally a few shots of Yucca. The plan for the movie is to take pictures progressively as the season advances, the Chinese magnolias to be followed by the poppies and day lilies in April, the grandifloras in May, the crepe myrtles and cannas in May and June, and so on throughout the season. The same characters will appear in the successive shots so that when the film is completed, the panorama will not be disturbed by different characters appearing in each phase of floral setting.

Only this morning did I learn that while I was knocking out mail last night between 9:30 and 10:00, the drizzle continuing through the night, J. H. had made his way through the gardens as far as the big pot where he poured in a flock of gold fish he had brought me from Alexandria. That is so typical of J. H. -- not seeming to mind the journey through the pitch black, rain soaked gardens to get the new-comers in their permanent pool. I noticed them this morning, a whole school of them, sipping breaths of air from the surface of the pot, when I passed the avant cour at dawn.

There were letters today from Governor Kemmon's secretary, saying that my letter regarding Oakley and Mrs. Stirling was being called to the attention of the Governor on his return from Washington, and another letter from the Park Commissioner, Mr. Wells, recalled his visit to Melrose with pleasure and promised to get up this way to see me again soon. He also agreed with me that the Park Commission was most fortunate to have such a fine Curator at Oakley as Mrs. Stirling. I shall of course pass these along to Mrs. Stirling in a letter later tonight.

Celeste gave me the enclosed clipping and I was glad to learn that Ethel Holoman had been honored, as indicated in the paper. I must drop her a line of congratulation, even though relations in that quarter seem a little strained. Frankly I think she deserves the award. But here we are at the end of the page, and just getting started. Again my thanks for your thoughtfulness in today's post. I shall continue holding the thought.....

1883

5930

Friday, February 13th, 1953.  
Memorandum

Another cloudless day with the thermometer in the 60's, making physical exercise pleasurable and giving one a sense of reserves of energy after the spade and hoe have been turned back to their resting places.

Mrs. Coombs telephoned today to give me a report concerning a case in which I had been interested. It had to do with a family of 6, the four children all quite small. A while back the bread-winner of the family felt something irritating in his nose. A parish doctor whom I did not know treated the man with penicillin for six weeks and the difficulty grew no better. Eventually another doctor was consulted and it was discovered the difficulty was in reality a cancer, and during the past month, the thing had made such progress that no operation is possible and it is just a question of a few months before the brain will be effected and the head of the family dead. It's a pitiful case. It was Mrs. Coombs' unpleasant assignment to acquaint the family with the news, and I am sure she was equal to the task, although it must have been painful.

Come to think of it, the physical problem confronting her, -- she goes to New Orleans Wednesday, is probably about the same trouble as was mentioned in your Saturday letter. I suppose such accidents happen frequently enough but it does seem odd we should both be acquainted with a patient, both being afflicted at the same time. She has endured hers since last Spring, I believe, but the need for daily medical attention has convinced her that something else ought to be done although she isn't sure that an operation is the answer.

Charles Cunningham telephoned me this morning. He wanted to thank me for the article sent him a few days ago and said it was precisely to his taste and that he was publishing it without changing a letter. I told him I thought him quite wrong in as much as I was quite certain if the spelling and some of the curious construction weren't altered a bit, nobody



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would make any sense out of it. He said they were planning to lay-out the article in connection with the illustrations this afternoon and he said he couldn't tell as yet if there was going to be any extra space or not, but if there should be, he wanted to ask if it would be acceptable to me if he used a plate illustration, -- either the plantation or the river. I told him I had no objection. He said he would be able to decide only after seeing how much space the layout required, and then only could he be sure if there would be room for one more cut.

The other day I had ordered some copies, as the thing is on a subscription basis but he did not know that until I told him so, after he had asked me how many copies I would like, as he intended presenting me with extra ones in appreciation for the cooperation. And so, in the event you care for more than two copies, please be assured you will be robbing nobody. It seems to me two copies used to be adequate for a scrap book, but on second thought I seem to recall the Madam sometimes used three or four. I suppose that perhaps depended on how much the articles jumped about from page to page. For the convenience of the scrapbook makers, I am hoping this issue may concentrate the article on a single page.

A slight interruption at this point, Don Worsley having telephoned to ask me about a big old plantation house, said to be off in the hills West of Monette's Ferry, on one of the old trace roads to Texas in ante bellum times. I know nothing about the place and suppose I would have heard of it ten years back had it existed, but I have agents in the one-time Robert McAlpin neighborhood and I shall shake the grapevine a bit and see if anything rattles out.

It was only last night, after turning on my radio, that I realized Lincoln's birthday was drawing to a close. I suppose Federal offices must have been closed but there was no evidence of a holiday in this neighborhood and public schools, among other institutions, functioned along quite as though the Emancipator had never had a natal day.

I think the enclosures, -- herewith or under separate cover, -- are of no especial interest, but I send them regardless. And so comes another week to a close. It has been a difficult one for little Miss Lee. I hope just ahead there may be something ever so much more restful.....

5932

Sunday, February 15th, 1953.

Memorandum:  
My thoughts have turned so frequently in the direction of little Miss Lee over this week end, hoping, hoping.....

The Friday rains continued through Saturday and I st night must have been inordinately quiet at the local honkey-tonks, what with the take home pay slight this week end because nobody had worked too much and because the mending rain must have made the family fireside seem doubly inviting.

But this morning's dawn was cloudless and instinctively I braced myself against road runners who, like the plantation folks, had probably done less gadding about because of the dampness.

I managed a few people in the morning with a couple of spaces in between to catch my breath and knock off a few Sunday letters. Just as we sat down to dinner at 12 across the fence, more pilgrims came, -- friends of Robinas who ought to have had better sense to appear at such an hour, and from then on I had no breathing spell until first dark.

Dr. Rand with Ellen Lockett and a couple of grown ups were here for a little while around 1 o'clock. They had been attending the Camellia Show in Shreveport and were heading toward Alexandria, -- the Show having reached its high point yesterday. He said Sister had been among those present but had not appeared to advantage as she was as drunk as a Lord.

Later in our conversation I learned that Mrs. White isn't expected to last but a very short time longer, although they have long wondered she could make it this long.

Somebody by the name of Miller, living in Tuckahoe, New York, had been directed by Sister to visit this place. The man is with the Guarantee Trust Company and I'll bet his associates have the vaguest notion he is down this way taking color pictures of magnolias. I was quite busy with other people so talked very little with him. He did mention how difficult it was in the last years of James W. Gerard's life to do any business with him,.....



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for whenever the banks were attempting needed re-organization plans for this or that concern in which Gerard held stock, he and his lawyers, --at his direction, would do everything possible to hamper and short circuit anything that didn't seem to follow the business pattern of a generation earlier.

The Coombs family dropped in to get some fig tree sprouts I had promised them. Mrs. Coombs leaves for the hospital during the middle of the week.

Dr. and Mrs. Aguerilla also passed this way, bent on taking color films; and so the afternoon rocked along. It was not precisely a quiet afternoon but everyone who came was civilized and it is always pleasant just so long as the lunatics aren't cluttering up the place.

Last night over the Mutual System out of Chicago, I heard as well presented a play as I can remember, --The Glass Menagerie. With only four characters participating, one could follow the character's portrayal easily. The parts seemed pretty well balanced, so far as lines were given, although I was reminded of The Merchant of Venice and the way the character of Shylock emerged as the most important one only after generations had elapsed allowing its original presentation, and I am under the impression if The Glass Menagerie is produced generations hence, it will be the mother's role that will come forward as the most important, although in last night's presentation the four parts seemed pretty evenly parceled out.

A slight interruption at this point wherein I had to write an order to the lady doctor. Sam Peace was carved up a bit on the top of his head by his current wife, the widow Nina Brown, the outrageous mother of my old friend Sam, and bloody Sam has been whisked off to town to have a bit of crocheting done on a head which should prove sufficiently soft to make it easy for the needle to penetrate.

So runs out the week and a new one begins. Aurelia came to see me the other day and I recommended that she visit her former employer. She did and I learned from both sides that ever body was happy about the reconciliation, which is purely personal and has nothing to do about resumption of employment in that quarter. But it is nice to know that separation has been joined again and I hope it may eventuate in some future advantage for both. My thoughts continue to flow in the direction of little Miss Lee and I shall continue to hold the thought that things are rocking along to her satisfaction.....

5934

Monday, February 16th 1953.

Memorandum:

A lovely pale yellow iris of the German variety unfolds its elegant blossom on Arenbourg. The Weather Man talks about a cold front advancing South across the Great Plains. I hold the thought that fleur de lys triumphs and that the cold front stalls, as it has so often before, off Fort Worth way.

In the mean time, the day was cloudless but not dustless, for a dust bowl in Texas was stirring mightily to filter the direct sunshine and reminding one of those saffron skies that dominated the Manhattan skies somewhere back in the mid 1930's.

Rock Ball sent the final sketch of the African House, requesting my approval. It looks alright to me and I shall ask them to put it in production forth with, I think I think it may roll a little but that will be determined only after it is released. I am not satisfied with the sketch I made of the town of Natchitoches thing and I have misgivings as to its success before I even send it for transfer from the "blown up" sketch to the "blown down" final details. But even if it turns out to be no good, it will sell itself as a souvenir item, although naturally I regret I haven't done better with it. The two mentioned items represent extremes in difference in this respect, --the African House is a single item which anyone can "get his teeth into" at a glance, one subject and readily comprehensible. The town thing, on the other hand, is a hodge-podge of stuffy element of which is too extraordinary and the whole thing something of a jumble and in no way suggesting a unity. But perhaps the tourist trade will snap at this example of over simplification, in spite of my pre-production bias. There's no question about getting rid of the initial batch, and if re-order isn't necessary, it may merely be classed as an important but not a vital segment in the Cane River series.

Mrs. Woods came down from town today by appointment, bringing with her the new Episcopal minister and his wife, -- the Wilsons, who have been stationed in Durant, Oklahoma, --where ever that may be. I had been warned by another member of their congregation not to have any wine bottle in evidence, as Mrs. Wilson had expressed



1883

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herself vigorously against anyone who would partake of  
the juice of the grape. And so, naturally, I brought out  
a bottle of port, and the Wilsons loved it.

Frances Henry returned from Mexico yesterday and was at  
Celeste's this afternoon but I did not pass that way, being  
engaged in a degree of gardening, following the withdrawal of  
the Wilson, for this is a dull season when I get more gardeners  
than I need, as opposed to none between April and November when  
there is ample excuse for a flock of them. If I were to  
confess to anyone what my method of gardening really is, I would  
say it is divided into two parts, - first, gardening by  
sheer anticipation, and second, gardening by power lawn mower. Each  
item has its value, so far as it goes, but it doesn't go very far  
although one does what one can.

It would seem poor taste to complain about Christmas presents,  
but I must say the attached sheet readily demonstrates the reason  
why I don't think much of the thing as stationary. I had  
envisioned something about as distinct as a water mark, and  
note what I got. Then, too, while it was not a bad idea to  
use the general layout of the Cane River design for such a purpose,  
the inclusion of my name on the thing seems wholly out of order.  
But I can employ it for correspondence with old friends, using  
the reverse side of the sheet, and they perhaps won't mind.

The flock of pictures sent for Charles Yunningham to select from  
for the anniversary number, were returned today. I know not which  
ones he selected, if any, but however that may be, I assume  
whatever illustrations have been decided upon have already been  
engraved. Perhaps I mentioned the issue will embrace about  
50 pages and that the thing is being printed in sections and held against  
finally assembling when the last batch has been run through the  
press. As this work progresses, the type is knocked down, following  
the printing of one section, re-set for the succeeding one and so on,  
which is just another way of saying that the thing cannot be re-  
issued from the original plates, since all save the last set will have  
been knocked down for each of the successive sections as prepared  
for publication.

Someone said the stationary stores in town and at the college are  
having a sell out of scrapbook, what with so many people planning to  
convert this issue into such a repository for preservation, as it is  
felt by many that it will be a valuable reference item.

I don't recall writing such a dull letter in ever so long.  
Let's hope I may not sag further by the morrow. Still I like  
the evening communion, regardless of the subject matter.....

1883

5936

Pat Tuesday, February 17th, 1953.

Memorandum: I am writing to you in the hope that you will find it interesting.

There were a few other letters, none of them having been opened,  
resting in my armor. I did get a chance to skim through one,  
however, but it was on the wings of the latest duck of my  
secretariat, and so I am really waiting until the morrow to  
thoroughly enjoy it.

But by dint of spelling out a number of words, I caught a  
little glimpse of your immediate program and I call you noble  
for having, under the pressure of existing circumstances, for  
having taken time out to afford me so much pleasure.

The vigil is well styled. I still count it odd that  
we each should know a different individual in the same situation.  
Mrs. Ucomb declined the proffered offers of members of her family  
and of friends to accompany her to New Orleans for her round at  
the Oschner clinic and so news concerning her adventures will  
be telephoned to her husband who will pass them about to her  
friends. As I understand it, the tapping of the spinal fluid  
has something to do with injecting some liquid which permeates  
the whole region served by the column so that X ray pictures  
may readily reveal precisely where a seepage indicates the seat of  
the difficulty to be. In hearing particulars about the one case,  
I shall feel better instructed to comprehend the situation  
obtaining in the other.

And may I thank you for giving me particular regarding  
Ben Ames Williams and the House divided. I, of course, had  
heard no news concerning said author and I appreciate your  
thoughtfulness in giving me the particulars.

Your account of the weather obtaining on the emancipator's natal  
day sounded most unlike what is obtaining in these parts, for  
again the day was cloudless and although cool, the thermometer



tonight will not fall below 35, it is said. There is a pretty young moon and as I strolled home from across the fence about 8:30, the milk and wine lilies gleamed with wonderful lustre in the half light shed by the svelt new crescent.

A vast racket, sounding like a million harpies thirsting for more blood at the foot of the guillotine rent the air around noon today. It was five trucks of young folks from the St. Mathew's school, out on a Mardi Gras frolic. They were all making strange noises that were neither screams nor songs but just plain results of exuberance, I guess. They along with a couple of trucks filled with members of the school band, stopped at the juncture of the Melrose-Bermuda roads and serenaded the community. Oddly enough, it was only through conversation with friends of color later in the day that I learned the identity of one of the most energetic members of the band, -- a clarinet player who turned out to be none other than one of the secretaries, being Helen, daughter of Fugabow. I never knew before that Helen had ever seen a musical instrument. It seems, however, that the local school has a flock of instruments which remain in the school but which are used by students being taught to play them. I think this is a wonderful idea and I intend doing something that will enable some of the better students to secure instruments of their own, for while they might not practice much outside of school, one this is certain, they will get mighty little practice if the only time they ever get to touch an instrument is during the hour in school during which they receive instruction.

I begrudged time I had to give pilgrims today, what with tons of things to do and two or three people to help me in the gardening department. But pilgrims from Baton Rouge, Minden, Shreveport, Colorado and heaven knows where all cascaded upon me.

A few days back I had received an invitation to a wild game supper at the Lambre plantation on the Joyous Coast, for tonight. The Lambre place, by the way, occupies all or a part of the Lestan Prudhomme plantation. J. H. and Celeste were invited and accepted, but naturally I declined. In the first place I don't care much about going out anyway and if I never eat any wild game I shall be just as happy.

And so after supper I sat for a while with M. dam Regard who is up and about. Some lawyer for the Red River Association, working on getting a few millions out of Congress for Red River improvements, a man who was only 4 hours late for an appointment with J. H. So runs out Pat Tues ay, being the latter for me because of the message f om little Miss Lee.....

Wednesday, February 18th, 1953.

Memorandum:

How nice to find another letter in today's post, following yesterday's surprise.

It is so kind of you to keep me abreast of the local situation. I need not repeat that I hope you will not undertake correspondence until things have reached a more normal status, knowing, as you do, that I will charge off the silence against grabbing a dab of relaxation which comes so infrequently your way these latter months.

The mention of Ward Morehouse brought back many a half forgotten yesterday. Perhaps I have mentioned before that for years he courted Irene Furcille. David Belasco's last star, -- "Dancing Partner" was the name of the play, as I recall. Irene and I had witnessed the marriage ceremony of two mutual friends, and Irene, then living in 57th Street, between 6th and 7th, as I recall, or perhaps 5th and 6th, gave quite a few parties for our friends. At that time Ward Morehouse and Cornelius Vanderbilt Jr. were contending for the affections of the lady but never did know which one succeeded. -- If either, -- and after Irene went to Hollywood to make some pictures, I lost touch with her. Somehow I got the impression Herr Morehouse had died years ago but obviously I was wrong. I suppose I confused a review of his book with someone else's obituary.

The weather today was cloudless but we had little or no sun, odd as that may seem. There wasn't any breeze much, but a heap of the Texas dust bowl remains suspended in the air in sufficient quantity to keep the sun hidden. Late this afternoon it began drizzling and the promise is for rain. I was glad I succeeded in getting some petunias planted, -- youthful plants, before the rain started.

Charles Cunningham telephoned me today to thank me for the flock of photographs I had sent for him to select from for the anniversary number. He says the entire edition has been

about the old land  
thing but he had to admit  
nevertheless that he agreed with him  
to admit that he had to  
agreed with him on during  
the German regime was his surprising  
the only thing I  
presenting an interesting  
cross section.



5939

8882

subscribed for and what with requests arriving daily for 25 to 50 copies from various quarters, near and far, it looks as though there were to be a vast disappointment on the part of many people.

I am so glad you mentioned that you could use three copies and I shall be glad to start them on their journey just as soon as they come to hand, which will probably be about March 13th. It will be interesting to read the article on Magnolia.

I was as busy as a bee this afternoon when who in the world should blow in but la Maybry, or whatever her name is. She is as tiresome and as kind as ever and threatens to pass this way again on the morrow to say Goodbye before heading home for Shreveport. She was full of particulars about Boston where she had spent considerable time last autumn. Fortunately other people came to see me and so I wasn't bored too long by her uninteresting chatter. I did learn from her that some bag in Shreveport said that she was going with Sister to Cloutierville on Friday and they were going to be at Melrose on Saturday. That is tiresome news alright, but I'm glad to know it ahead of time.

It was so kind of you to give me your opinion regarding which subject lends itself better for photographing, the sketch rather than the plate. I have sent the sketch to the manufacturer but can't think why I did so, for there is no rush about turning out the African House thing. Perhaps I shall ask for its return a little later. The only plate I should really like to start rolling is the Audubon one, for it should be advantageous to have it at Oakley as soon as possible. I imagine Oakley will get quite a lot of the Natchez pilgrimage trade in March, but the thing will never be ready by then. But all through the summer Oakley will have some pilgrims, and then, of course, there is next March.

I have seen J. H. e infrequently of late, I haven't had an opportunity to discuss his notion as to current political trends. I did ask him the other day what his opinion was concerning the Benson stand on farm prices and he said he thought Benson was altogether right in letting farm prices go it alone without price supports, --if that, indeed, is what Benson said. My own opportunity to digest the Benson position has been so scant that I know nothing about which side I am on but I always like to get J. H.'s views as representing an interesting cross section. The only thing I agreed with him on during the Truman regime was his surprising declaration that he hated to admit Truman could be right on anything but he had to admit nevertheless that he agreed with him about tide oil lands.....

1182

5940

Thursday, February 19th, 1953.

Memorandum:

A nice, slow drizzle came blanting down all last night and all day and is continuing now at 9 o'clock. The forecast is for scattered showers on the morrow. This dampness and cloud coverage was just perfect for the petunia plants set out yesterday and they should have a good start by the time the sunnys are planted late in March. I should imagine these items ought to provide pleasant splashes of color camera for the color film movie cameras when they begin recording the poppies and day lilies that will dominate the color arrangement. The poppies are advancing nicely and will have to be thinned out shortly. The mild winter seems to have encouraged every poppy seed to do its best, and as millions were planted, millions are crowding each other and will be cutting down each other's growth in three quarters of them. I aren't weeded out shortly. It's a curious thing about poppies, they simply can't be transplanted and so the sturdy ones that are removed from their sturly neighbors can only be thrown away, which always seems a great waste.

In spite of the moisture, quite a few pilgrims passed this way. One of them had recently been to Magnolia and Miss Sally had spoken of the article about her plantation that is to appear in the Times. She said that her son, Mat, had contacted me for particulars about the place but had discovered that my information concerning it was all wrong. Today's post was inconsequential but I shall enclose or send under separate cover a couple of items for no particular reason save to give you an opportunity to keep abreast of the ebb and flow of correspondence.

If I can readily set hand to same, I shall enclose an air mail from The Bluff Plantation. The reference to a European jaunt is interesting and very kind, I must say, but I need not hasten to add that I shall decline the invitation forthwith. I suppose Ray must be handling much of the Storm's correspondence for her since letters seem few and far between.



0482

5941

far between so far as la storm herself is concerned, although that last one which was typed, if I remember correctly, wasn't so far back, perhaps. The one thing about the friendship which developed through correspondence that seems truly remarkable is the fact that the niece seems as pleasantly inclined toward the association as the elder lady. I think everyone must have experienced friendships with this or that individual but this association is proving an exception to prove the rule that such things are possible. One thing is certain, the friendship will never be put under the strain of a European jaunt and what with the distances between the Cooper and the Cane being forever maintained, perhaps this is one of those affairs that will last endlessly.

On several occasions in the past, people who were want to correspond with the madam gradually realized that as she gradually gave up pen pushing and I attended to some of that business for her, the people to whom I wrote slowly began to accustom themselves to the substitute. And finally it came to such a pass that the correspondence afforded sufficient satisfaction on both sides that real friendships actually developed. Perhaps it will be this way in the storm matter. I am hoping so, for it always seemed to me quite logical that mutual friendships should beget individual friendships.

In an earlier letter to Kay, I mentioned the possibility that sometime when the season is right for taking air pictures for an article on the Cane River country, it might turn out that the time could be so co-ordinated as to enable her to crank up her sky wagon and give Carolyn an opportunity to take some aerial shots, especially in the neighborhood where at its point of inception, Cane River is separated from Red River by a mere sliver of land, -- a man-made levy. But this is merely a whimsey, of course, for knowing Carolyn as we do, we may be quite sure we can never count on her in any matter concerning anything resembling a time table.

I am writing Rock Hall tonight, asking that the final sketch for the African house be returned as soon as the plates go into production. Perhaps the town of Watchtobes sketch will be ready at the same time so we can have a go at both at the same time. We shall need but a single glossy print of each but they may be worth while for Spring and fall publicity. So things turn, and how nice it would be if conversation with Miss Lee never had to pause.....

0483

5942

*Double letters*

Friday, February 20th, 1953.  
Memorandum:

Yesterday's rain continued today, but we are promised clearing skies and cooler weather tonight. I can well believe it, what with fresh breezes blowing from the North and an occasional twinkle of stars through rifts in the clouds.

Altogether we have had a couple of inches of rain, I suppose but it fell so gently much of it must have soaked into the earth. Twice I had to dip water out of the sugar cauldron to discourage the gold fish from trickling over into the Giant's beard below and you will agree that gold fish in the beard of either a giant or a dwarf would look odd.

Today I was surprised to receive a telephone call from Mrs. Coombs. Her verdict was that an operation would produce but problematic corrections and that the injured nerves can best be soothed by complete rest and inactivity, plus a determination to withstand the probable pains that will be present from time to time henceforth from here on out. As she is a very active person, it is obvious she will never slow down unless, indeed, the injured nerves eventually force her to do so. It's remarkable how much time hypochondriacs have to nurse their imagined ills and how little opportunity other people have to give thought to giving themselves required attention. I am glad that two of her three children have achieved maturity and that the other, aged 12 or 13, is on his way to giving himself "must" attention, in case anything should happen that would cripple the lady.

I laughed to myself the other night when Dr. Coombs telephoned me, following Mrs. Coombs' departure for New Orleans. He said he was having a wonderful time at carpentry, making a brooder for some baby chicks he was ordering. Explaining that when his wife is home, he isn't permitted to do carpentry in the house but now that he was alone, he was turning the kitchen into a real carpenter's shop. When not at college, he is said to devote all his time to gardening, for which he has a baby tractor of some kind that has a million gadgets on it for ploughing, cultivating, mowing grass and heaven knows what all. I believe they have two or three acres around their new home in East Watchtobes, and everyone says it is very pretty, but I have never seen it.



5943

I thought it so kind of Rudolph to send along a set of the pictures he made while here. Oddly enough, both he and Carolyn got to snapping their cameras just one week before the banana plants in front of Yucca were transplanted to form the Orinoco court in front of the place, so that they are still to be seen in their pictures as being slap in front of the gallery which they no longer are.

As between this paragraph and the above, la Maybry telephoned me from town to say she had not gone home today as planned because some tonnage or other up the line had knocked down trees and generally upset things. She says she is heading back to Matchitoches in a couple of weeks to pick up some companion who will drive with her to St. Francisville, for they both want to see Oakley. I guess I had better write Mrs. Stirling to say that these are no special friends of mine, for they are tiresome bags and I suppose they will pass themselves off as old playthings of mine and while I don't mind that mis-information, I don't want Mrs. Stirling to go to any trouble on my account in receiving them.

Copies of Life continue coming through on schedule although the renewal card has not appeared as yet, but I suppose it may be expected to do so with any issue now. I was especially entranced with this week's copy, especially the section having to do with the Bibles. The mermaid, oddly enough, was exactly what I wanted to see, for I had been talking with somebody or other a while back about the triple tailed mermaids of the 5th century and after all the conversation, I found myself wanting to see how any old mermaid looked, it had been so long since I had seen one. And then, by chance, just as I opened the magazine, there stood the lady, big as life and twice as natural, and I was altogether entranced. I am going to round up some passing pilgrim and get the first one who knows his alphabet to read me the article, for I know it is going to be as informative as the pictures are delightful. Again my blessings on you for making this pleasure mine.

As for Talking Book reading, I seem to be doing mighty little these days. I am still dipping into Theodora and the Emperor by Harold Lamb and usually falling asleep before finishing the page. The few paragraphs having to do with the building of St. Sophia Church appealed to me, but that whole business of the 6th century, sandwiched in between the Grandeur that was Rome and the Middle Ages seems a little of both and not enough of individualism in itself to make it very fascinating. I suppose this will be a busy week end for little Miss Lee. I shall be thinking so often of her.....

*Joanah and the whale*

5944

Sunday, February 22nd, 1953.

Memorandum:

At 10:20 this morning, my telephone rang. Shreveport was calling. It was Madam Mabry, calling me to say invitation to learning would be on the air in 10 minutes. I thought it kind of her, as I had mentioned missing the program and unable to find it. As I hung up the receiver, I glanced askance at the letter I had just typed to Mrs. Stirling in which I had explained to her that if la Maybry should pass her way in the next two weeks and explain she was a friend of mine, I hoped Mrs. Stirling would go to no trouble, since in a manner of speaking while Mrs. Maybry was a friend of mine, I did not consider myself a friend of la Maybry's. But I let the letter stand, for I think it unfair to let Mrs. Stirling go to any trouble for la Maybry on the assumption she was doing anything for me.

I planned something major on Saturday and got paid back for it in quite an unexpected fashion. It was a chill day, and I cut off all heat in the living room, expecting the Wenks would be blowing in with a flock of friends, -if, indeed, they have any such, and that I would make the place as uncomfortable as possible. A tap came at my door and it was Dr. and Mrs. Knipmeyer and children and the in-laws of their son the in-laws coming down from Brooklyn on their initial visit. It was a cold reception alright but with congenial people, such matters can be corrected more quickly than with others.

The wenks, four strong, blew in with J. A. at supper. They wouldn't sit at table but let the children eat. J. A. urged the parents to partake but they, for what reason I know not would not. Perhaps some hint of the reason may be found in a statement made by Sister on reaching the front gate immediately following supper when holding a biscuit she had picked up on leaving the dining room, explained to a passer-by that they would not let her eat anything in her home former home and she had only been able to pick up a crust when they weren't looking. What impressions an addled brain can produce on people who know her not.

I shall write Vera tonight, asking his opinion on mid West small town psychology, for I had an idea which might bear might



5945

not be advantageous.

From a letter recently addressed to some State agency in Iowa, I learned that Mount Vernon is a small city in Iowa where Cornell College is situated.

You will recall that Mary Whitaker and Alice Walworth Graham have the painting of the deer's head under which, in his own hand, is written something to this effect:

"This deer's head was painted by me on July 3rd, 1845 at Mount Vernon, the deer having been shot by Mrs. Harris. J. J. Audubon."

My thought was that a reproduction of this deer's head, together with the text, might be just the thing for a plate bearing a cartouche reading:

"The Audubon Memorial Plate of Mount Vernon, Iowa."

or some such.

I shall cast about to find somebody I know who knows somebody or other living in Mount Vernon who might tell me about the gift shop situation there, etc., etc., and I shall expect you to tell me what he thinks of the possibility of mid-west citizens of any town, and also what he thinks graduates and especially old graduates of Mount Vernon's Cornell, in responding with cash for a plate of this description. I should think it might make an ideal thing for a town if the people are Audubon conscious, for it is perhaps the only painting Audubon ever did that bears in his hand the name of the place where he did his painting, appearing on the painting itself.

All this is a "shot in the dark", but it does seem to have sufficient elements of interest to make pondering on the matter worthwhile. I have had an odd coincidence, following my mention of life in Friday's memo that Saturday's post should have brought the enclosed card. My view of obtaining circumstances, I think it would be as well to avoid investment in this matter for a while. You can always mention anything special coming out in the magazine, and I can borrow one from town if something special appears, then, later, when economic things get back into balance, we can make use of the card, following the lapse. I keep my promise in forwarding it but I pray you to let the matter slide until things on the domestic hearth have righted themselves considerably. I feel Miss Lee will understand the wisdom of my recommendation of this point, and I urge you to be guided accordingly for the moment.....

5946

Monday, February 23rd, 1953.

Memorandum:

I expect it's a holiday in your neighborhood, -- at least I suppose business is suspended, but that doesn't always guarantee a holiday to the individual. But I am hoping it provided something of the sort for you.

The plantation started off bravely enough on a work day this morning, but moisture stealing up from the Gulf, got this fairly damp by noon which proved more effective for the field workers than the birthday of the Founder, -- although I haven't a doubt there was enough celebrating unknowingly yesterday.

The morning post brought me a few letters, but oddly enough, such a birthday and my secretaries, you have to hand with them, Miss Kate, Miss Nellie, La Storm, etc., and each writing a little more curiously than the next.

And then the telephone rang, -- May Balthasar, saying she was stirring up some fine popcorn and asking if she might bring me some on the morrow. I'll bet my secretaries love popcorn and it will be nice to see poor May, although she has a perfect genius for arriving precisely at mail time. That invariably gums up the coffee cups across the fence, for May doesn't feel that she, a person of color, should toy with a demi-tasse while white folks are engaged in the same business, so that the amount of nervous chatter on her part and a decided attack of the nerves on La Storm's part never fails to put things into a social shambles.

Or a telephoned me today to ask me about the opening paragraph of an article she is doing for the special issue of the Times.

Another interruption, but this time from a related secretary who surprised me by being able to read the Monk's Corner letter, which, as you will note from the enclosure, was not from La Storm. Although the time for her proposed visit is not too good, still I shall be glad to chat with her and put a final No to the European business. I mentioned the movies of the garden to La Storm, and now it



5947

would appear from Kay's letter that that may well serve as  
a excellent reason for remaining here. Odd, isn't it,  
that nobody can understand that I really have no desire to  
go flying about like a chicken with its hat off.

Besides, one can but wonder what Melrose would look like,  
and how much of it would be left, were I to depart for  
a prolonged summer's jaunt.

Among today's pilgrims was a lady from Davenport, Iowa.  
I thought I would see what she had to say about Mount Vernon.  
She told me she lived on the Mississippi side of the State  
and that Mount Vernon was on the Missouri River side and  
so she didn't know anything about it except that there was  
a college there and that Mount Vernon is 15 or 20 miles from  
Cedar Rapids. This, of course, was all very illuminating, --in  
a way, but this is the second time, --the other by letter from  
Des Moines that one has been told Mount Vernon is so many miles  
from Cedar Rapids. And this enlightens me just as much as  
the answer to my question regarding the location of Commerce, Texas,  
where the lady from there confided that it was in Hunt County.

from last night, I heard some report of a rather big business  
awards made by the Freedom Foundation to various peoples  
such as Cecile B. de Mille, Fulton J. Sheen and so on. For  
the first time I found myself wishing the speakers had been a  
little more explicit in their references to the historic  
winter at Valley Forge, what with some of them saying it was  
in 1778 and others saying it was 1779. I suppose  
it could have been both years, and I ought to remember  
which one it was, having read Mr. Freeman's account of it not  
too long back. I suppose it was 1778 or 1779, but the  
broadcast would have been more orderly if the speakers had agreed.

Having the Vice President on the program somehow added no thrill  
to the business at hand, although from the applause I gather  
those present were not of my frame of mind in regard to the  
gentleman from California. After the heat of the campaign, nearly  
everyone else seems to have fallen into accustomed places of  
indifference in the public mind. A Vice President is usually a  
forgotten man to begin with but I must say I have heard quite a  
few staunch Eisenhower enthusiasts speak with apology or dislike  
of Mr. Nixon. Sometimes he, of all people, seems to me to personify  
more than anyone else that "mess in Washington" he used to talk so  
glibly about during last autumn. Well, just so long as he  
remains Vice President, it really doesn't matter so much, I reckon.....

5948

Tuesday, February 24th, 1953.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your letter of Thursday in today's  
post and how glad I am you could report so much interest-  
ing news.

I think it not so remarkable that one member of the  
family made such record progress but that another member  
survived. Of all the long and varied programs for a  
soul to maintain with such persistency, yours takes  
the cake, and it is comforting to know that the absences  
from home, day after day may accordingly be shortened con-  
siderably by now.

And thanks no end for telling me news of others. It is  
so good to know that Nadine is, perhaps, by now a blushing  
bride. The initial amaze, I feared, might be one that  
would impel her to perpetual maidenhood or the veil, and so  
the fact that another interest has emerged is splendid news  
for a poor soul whose life was probably never too happy and whose  
ensuing years might have been doubly drab, were she to continue  
along the path of the past few years. Of course I haven't heard  
from her since the last letter which was enclosed with a memo,  
and heaven knows that was years back.

It's nice to hearigon's name again and that of the  
B's. I had never thought of it until you remarked upon the  
resemblance between Martha and Mrs. Helman but there certainly  
is, come to think of it. Martha is finer and more sympathetic  
as a personality but otherwise the patterns are remarkably  
similar.

And I was not the only one who was made happy by the  
morning post, for Celeste was enchanted with your letter and  
sent back the coffee until after she had had an opportunity  
to read it through to me. I must say I agreed with her when  
she said it was one of the nicest anyone could hope to  
come to hand, and twice later in the day she referred to it,  
so that you may be assured that she really was very appreciative.



5949

The "dews and damps" continue, with heavy mists and sprinkles this morning and a low ceiling all day, with the thermometer in the 40's. But all this was to the advantage of the more delicate plants set out recently and all of them seem to have responded energetically, which is about the only thing they could be expected to do under such advantageous atom spheric conditions.

But the weather didn't stave off pilgrims who, for the most part, were inclined to be rather on the dumb side but withal kindly. A Dr. Webb of the Baptist persuasion in San Antonio was among those passing this way. He was rather good at asking personal questions and his wife rather doltish and I rather bored with the whole business. He reminded me of a like question by "S. R." Johnston when he inquired:

"Just what is your position in the Melrose system".

I told him I hadn't the vaguest notion although I was quite sure I was not any part of said system. He seemed puzzled by that response and re-acted as though he felt I was either trying to side step or make fun of the question, and I didn't bother to correct either assumption.

I am sorry that I had to hold the clipping about the Aswell book until tomorrow, but I shall be glad to run through it. What a pity a man so gifted will chuck everything overboard for such trash as he has been stirring up of late.

The enclosure I am appending, concerning Martha Robinson, speaks for itself. Perhaps this list of her activities explains why we hear from her so infrequently.

There seems to have been quite a flurry started over my inquiries as to musical efforts in the St. Matthew school. Now several of the students who could take up horn blowing for lack of a horn, -- for it seems that ownership of the instrument has something to do with the thing, are clamoring for aid in their pursuit of the Muse. And so I expect their teacher will be bound to see me one of these days, and I shall be taking the matter up with somebody or other in the Baton Rouge office of the Educational Department.

It has been such a happy day, thanks to your nice letter and its promise that you may be on the track to normalcy again. I shall continue holding the thought.....

5950

Wednesday, February 25th, 1953.

Memorandum:

The drizzle continues, with the promise for more on the morrow, but the weather is mild and everything green is moseying along in the right direction, even though the pace be slow, what with the thermometer in the 50's. But one of these days the sun will appear, and then everything will jump astonishingly.

For lack of anything else to read, I dipped into a rather odd volume last night, -- "Rome and a Villa" by Eleanor Clarke, - a Doubleday publication.

It started out in a style reminding me a little of Ransel A. Taylor's "Leonardo, the Florentine", but it soon developed a less weighty message while the appearance of biological matters and sex subjects crept into it sufficiently to explain the Doubleday part of the business. Still, some of the paragraphs in the opening chapter were pleasantly heady in their references to matters ancient and modern were of such quality as to make the reading and re-reading of a page quite pleasant, and I suppose this would be doubly so for a person having a better acquaintance with Roman history than I. Some people, and perhaps even, if nothing in particular, in the case of the Taylor volume, however, nobody, I feel perfectly clear, will ever read the entire book, but many like me will love to dip into it for a page or two once in a while.

And speaking of differences, I would touch on another that impressed me but yesterday. There is the case of Andy who never in his life set foot inside a church and who honestly hasn't any more idea as to the identity of Christ than the man in the moon. But somehow, perhaps by instinct, perhaps by what I don't know, Andy never fails to hang his hat on a chair on the back gallery before opening the door to the Chapel and going inside to freshen the place up a little. I have often pondered on this, and double so a while back when Andy thought I had gone to town and didn't know I had changed plans before reaching the bridge and returned to know quite unexpectedly. On stepping into my den from the front gallery, I could see the form of Andy's hat hanging on a chair on the back gallery while Andy, inside the Chapel, was putting the place to rights, and certainly under the impression that I was miles away.



2330

5951

Wednesday, February 26th, 1953.

It was with such things in mind, I suppose, that I found myself vaguely surprised yesterday when Dr. Webb of the First Baptist Church of San Antonio and his son, the Reverend Webb of the First Baptist Church inatchitoches, asked if they might visit the Chapel and, on entering, both kept on their head gear.

I am sure nobody ever told Andy to remove his hat on entering a church, for he has never been inside one and is, of course, a member of no denomination, unless, indeed, he may be said to belong to those who love God. But, come to think of it, if he were a Protestant he would feel it incumbent upon him to show disdain for anything smacking of Catholicism, even though the Catholic clergy would never set their seal of approval on the Chapel to the Blessed Martin.

My assumption that members of the clergy of any denomination would feel bound to show due respect to the symbols of the religion of any other denomination is apparently as wrong as parallel assumptions in matters of race. Because Dr. Wenk is half Jewish, he naturally would be inclined to treat other racial minorities with human decency, I would suppose. But I was quite wrong in that, too, for he treats the negro with even more disdain and with more unkindness than the hill-billy who never has to wince at the mention of "that Jew".

The enclosure from Lady Lake is of no importance but I send it along regardless, as it is always pleasant to hear from her.

In casting about for additional information about Mount Vernon, Iowa, I learn the name of its newspaper which seems about as unmanageable as anything I ever ran across in that field, --

"The Hawk Eye Record and Lison Chronicle, and Herald."

Boiled down to something like "Hawk Eye Herald" the thing would certainly be a heap more easily remembered -- and manageable.

I am returning the Charlotte paper's review of Mr. Aswell's "Br ds and bees, which review should a little to seal the book, I should guess. Just out of sheer whimsy, I stuck Jimmy's name in the list of literary names associated with Melrose for the anniversary number. I thought it might call forth a couple of laughs and curses from different quarters, and I care not which may come from whom. I'm still enjoying your Thursday letter and all the news, as I hold the thought things are easing off a bit....

2333

5952

Thursday, February 26th, 1953.

Memorandum:

It was 9 o'clock this morning before the sun finally broke through the heavy fog, and from then on until sun down, it was pure summer. After so many days of drizzle, the blue sky looked so new washed and brilliant while the tender new plants almost seemed to jump with pent up vigor. I thought the opportunity perfect for transplanting a lot of stuff and I planted some more sinia seed, including the white ones from the Christmas package. These will undoubtedly germinate speedily in the big earthen jars which I placed in the little house by the side gate where the sun will get ample opportunity to urge them along and the glass will protect them from the frosts, if any, during the next four weeks, after which they can be transplanted. I had almost forgotten about Buck Brown who went away with some traveling show a couple of years back. Tonight while we were at supper, an agent of the F. B. I. put in an appearance. It seems that the Parish Draft Board had turned in Buck's card which automatically set the wheels in motion. I suppose it will be rather easy to track down poor Buck who probably has long dreamed of home but probably didn't have sense enough to figure out a way to get back. The F. B. I. man remarked that after the boys turned over to the Draft Board he will undoubtedly be placed in A-1 anyway, which means that the excitement has been carried through to no particular point so far as the Army is concerned, but I feel quite sure that so far as Buck is concerned, it will be wonderful to get back again after all his travels.

From a friend of the Germans, I learn that their nephew drove over from Alabama to see what was what and learned the doctor, a brain specialist, had found "ele Virginia's" mind alright and thought her eyes would improve as her physical structure is strengthened. As for



5953

the nephew, & he is said to be an expert in in the  
automotive field and he endorsed a new second hand car the  
gals had acquired to haul themselves about in. It is  
understood that Caroline will do all the driving which  
certainly promises little by way of assurance that this  
latest vehicle will have a life expectancy any greater  
than that all that have gone before.

I took another dip in the book, "Rome and a Villa",  
and regretted that the first chapter was a facade giving no  
authentic concept of what was beyond, for the rest of  
the business seems a hodge-podge of commentaries about  
various historic spots in the Eternal City and a long  
epitaph of some contemporary Sicilian bandit of recent demise  
of whom I never heard and in whose story I have scant interest.  
Perhaps Miss Clarke is a newspaper woman who, on her return home,  
discovered she had a heap of data in her notebooks which might  
be jumbled together and cast into book form. For all I  
know, she may be an embryo Rachel Annand Taylor, but save for  
the opening chapter, there is nothing further along in the  
book to suggest a parallel.

Grandpa has been sitting on the shelf just  
on the far side of the window here beside my desk, his  
feet tucked in under his warm stomach and his eyes  
blinking the sleepy indifferent sort of way as he observes  
my thumping on this keyboard. By the way he sometimes  
glances with equal indifference toward the White Garden, I  
concluded something about as exciting there as here might  
be going on. I stepped out on the gallery for a  
moment and soon noticed a couple of big (interruption)  
a couple of three rabbits, having the loveliest sort of a  
relax, for the new clover must be delicious about now and  
the garden is so beautifully lighted by a moon which  
must be approaching full. Oddly enough, in spite of the  
strength of the moonlight, a couple of the major planets  
are blazing with remarkable clarity. I believe it is  
Venus, "sloping slowly toward the West" which, as I stepped  
on to the gallery, seemed to be resting just at the tip top  
of the dark magnolia.

The interruption was a telephone call from somebody in  
Shreveport who had been here a few weeks ago and wanted to  
come again, either Saturday or Sunday of this week. But I  
put them off a week. I don't seem to remember the people but  
the lady seemed pleasant and says she will telephone me again  
next week. As the Madam used to say: "We certainly know some  
mighty curious people". But now I must give Grandpa a glass of  
milk and then roll up my sleeves and knock off some mail. It's  
been so nice chatting with little Miss Lee.....

Rice Cafe 5954  
Carolyn Ramsey 7/4

Friday, February 27th, 1953.

Memorandum:

Pure summer is upon us, -- for the moment, at least,  
but one evidence of its arrival isn't so pleasant, -- a  
billion big old bumble bees, sitting down sawdust from  
the rafters on the gallery, and nothing to discourage  
them until along about June when the air planes start dusting  
the cotton which isn't planted as yet. It would seem as  
though we ought to have ample stores of sawdust by  
June. I only hope the galleries will still be holding.

The enclosures are of little or no interest, but  
I send them along regardless.

The black and white pictures of Oakley mentioned in Carolyn's  
letter, refer to a couple I need to contrive the Oakley plate.  
She needn't bother hurrying about sending them along as  
the plate had to be made without the photographic record I  
needed.

Her reference to writing J. H. has to do with the chance  
that he, as Chairman of the Cotton Council, might designate  
funds from that outfit to bring out a book on cotton,  
calculated to stimulate general interest in the staple.  
It seems that some big oil concern has gotten out a book  
on the oil industry which paid the contrivor well for the doing,  
and it is possible the cotton people might do likewise, but  
that is merely a thought.

At supper tonight, J. H. told me he was expecting to  
fly to Washington tomorrow night for some E. E. A. conference,  
returning home Monday. Monday night, I assume.

And along about first dark, Andy passed this way, after  
having done a bit of gardening across the fence during the  
afternoon. He told me that Celeste had gone down to see  
Aurelia this afternoon and had asked her to give her a hand  
on Sunday, as she is expecting guests. Andy understood  
Aurelia agreed.

From Kay's letter of a few days back, I gather she may  
be passing this way Sunday morning, although what people mean by



5955

morning, especially "Sunday morning" is pretty hazy in my mind. Something tells me I had better advise the ladies next door not to count on me for Sunday dinner, since that is usually served at 11:30, and I don't intend putting out the information that South Carolina is something this way on Sunday morning or there would be a perfect tizzy about dinner, etc., etc., and what with a rigid concept of the proper hour the hot biscuits should be served, I see no point in erecting a flock of needless hurdles. I'm still mindful of that remarkable supper that Carol, Ruth Hopkins and I attended a summer or so ago at which every person concerned, hostess and each individual guest, were mighty unhappy about the gathering although each was going through the motions of doing what the other was supposed to be expecting.

Considerate hosts and considerate guests are plentiful enough across the width and breadth of civilization but it's wonderful how often perfection meets perfection.

I take it there's a show at the local honkey tonk tonight what with half a dozen people passing this way, stopping long enough to say Howdy and to mosey on. One such whom I had not expected, was Y. C. who seems to have come back to the country to do a bit of farming, following his sojourn in Shreveport for the past six months or so. Of course one never asks why the change in residence, and a dozen different reasons, each true or false, might be set forth. I believe he was living with his Grandmother in Shreveport, and as she is inclined to be a little on the straight-laced side, it is quite possible she had difficulty in making her stalwart grandson toe the line.

I was glad to see Peter, too, for by some whimsy, he had achieved a color combination which would have been frightening on a white person but somehow seemed wonderfully harmonious on such an ebony form as his. He was wearing a new dark brown felt hat, a kaki shirt, a sleeveless chartreuse sweater, brick red pants and brown shoes. Toss in the black of his skin and the white of his excellent teeth and a couple of snapping black eyes and you have a combination of tints and shades that ought to frighten horseless carriages but somehow resolves the spectrum into a symphony that is altogether pleasing and hilarious.

But I must get on with a few little chores and then get a dab of shut-eye before dawn puts in an appearance for I want to garden madly before pilgrims put in an appearance.....

5956

Sunday, March 1st, 1953.

Memorandum: This little while back by none other than

Warm and drizzly all week end, and everything is growing

with abandon. Saturday was such a pleasant day, for the promise of dampness that held during the non-drizzling hours discouraged pilgrims and the dampness made weed pulling a most enjoyable task, what with the ease they could be extracted from their moist moorings.

Mrs. Coombs passed this way to say howdy to Madam Regard and to me, and as a result of her visit, I had a most enjoyable Sunday morning breakfast. I saved the deviled eggs to eat and the home-made cheese spread introduced something a little odd for early Sunday morning, but nonetheless quite delicious.

She appears less worried than before her trip to the clinic which is probably due to the fact that at least there is the peace of mind that comes with knowledge of the precise situation and one's ability to attack the knowable, regardless of the amount of distraction that comes with pain. Having the energy of ten people, she will probably never slow down, but perhaps her difficulty will tend to persuade her to make speed with less haste, at least.

J. H. flew to Washington last evening and so we dined alone across the fence, but dinner was a little later than usual as some of the Lambres had stopped in for a drink on their way home from Church. As I had declined their game dinner a week or so back, they proposed a party for me, but I suggested that since Lent tends to cripple some people's ability for full enjoyment of social events, it might be more successful if we delayed the thing until after Easter. Everyone thought that an excellent idea and by Easter I shall have thought up something else.

May came around 2 and remained until after 5. Last time I saw her I got the impression she was sort of forty-ish. Today I gathered she was on the far side of 60. But she was as pleasant as any person who never gives a correct impression of years, and we talked much on a dozen subjects. I think a storm will not go to Europe if I finally decline to accompany them, and I gave a definite statement that I would not go. The catch in the thing is



5957

that if I decide not to go to Europe, everybody will spend the summer on the Cooper. Kay will fly over to Watchitoches and pick me up, etc., etc. I'll not do that either, but like the Lambre party, that can be taken care of when the time comes.

I think Adam Storm has mentioned a monastery across the Cooper from the Bluff. Kay told me that these Trappists were presented with the fine property a little while back by none other than your friend, Calre Booth Luce, for the plantation was one of her country homes.

I thought this twist was interesting; --there is an ancient Episcopal Church, --the Strawberry Parish, and its ancient graveyard adjoining the former Luce property. While still owning the place, la Luce's daughter was killed in the California automobile accident, and although she was some sort of a Protestant other than an Episcopalian, la Luce asked for permission from the Strawberry Church that her daughter might be buried in that graveyard where her daughter had been well acquainted with the general neighborhood. The request was unusual, but permission was granted. Then, a little later, la Luce had her mother's body exhumed from the North Carolina graveyard and brought to Strawberry and placed beside the grave of her daughter. That was a little unusual, since the mother had never been an Episcopalian either. I believe some kind of gift was presented to the church. A little later, as we all know, la Luce became a Catholic, and the Strawberry congregation took it as something of a slap in the face when la Luce had both her daughter and mother exhumed from the Strawberry church yard and carted across the property line into the Catholic property which she had presented to the Trappists, so they might "rest in holy ground", as was explained.

So much for the new Ambassador to Italy. It is vaguely amusing, don't you think, that a lady so facile with words and public speech should have conveyed her property to the order of monks, famous for not talking. But Kay says that even the Trappist can do a heap of chattering if they set their minds to it, for it seems that the Bluff Plantation and the monastery are on the same party telephone line, and when the Brothers get to going it, they really can keep the service tied up by the hour.

Caroline and Virginia were reported as getting along alright but like other who know them, Kay wonders how long the present Briarwood bus will hold up. Caroline sent me a bouquet of white hyacinthes and some gigantic sprays of sub-apple blossoms and many admonitions about writing, which I shall acknowledge before folding up my beard.

And so the day runs out and March gets under way. I hope you didn't have to undergo too much open house.....

5958

Monday, March 2nd, 1953.

Memorandum: I was impressed by the fact that the fifteen million dollar foundation for the investigation into the New York Times have anything more than casual reference to the event. Mr. S. S. expressed the feeling that this fund being used as it is by people of outstanding ability, the "dews and damps" continue with the thermometer around the mid 70's and the humidity at 100. Somehow the postman must have headed out much too early and accordingly brought me precisely nothing. That is always a poor way to start the week, meaning as it does, that Tuesday will probably come along with a double dip in the first class department.

I had a brief go at "Home and a Villa" last night. Apparently I have finished the section on Hardian's villa at Tivoli which I found a real Rachel and Raynor business and much to my liking. The next section has to do with Holy Weeks in general and the 1950 or whatever the date, one in particular, for a long time, I have been urging the Library of Congress to give a brief biographical sketch of the author at the beginning of each volume but have convinced no one, obviously, that this would enhance the value of the recording, so far as the user of Talking Books goes. I wish they had done something of this sort for one Eleanor Clark for I find myself wondering as to her nationality which is perhaps British, a conclusion stemming from the fact, in my own mind, from the fact that Miss Taylor of like artistry was British, I think. I imagine some of this material in the book may have appeared in magazines, especially the fine chapter on the cats living in the fountain in the market square in Rome. Perhaps the style is too heavy for magazine purposes or readers, but as the copyright dates listed at the beginning of the book cover two or three different years, it would seem as though some of the material might have appeared in some such medium. It is obvious of course that the book was written in a position to know many of the details and it is a gay frame of mind but it seemed to me I detected a little cloud on the horizon this morning when Celeste confided to me that her new servant is inclined to be arrogant. I learned on Saturday that Aurelia had been asked to assist on Sunday when Celeste



was expecting company and that Aurellia had agreed to lend a hand, but the weather caused the guests to delay their visit and so the 'extra helper' wasn't needed.

I was impressed tonight by Eric Severai's broadcast regarding the fifteen million allotment by the Ford Foundation for an investigation into investigations. Perhaps you heard him remark that only The New York Times gave anything more than casual reference to the event. Mr. S. expressed the opinion that this fund, being used as it is, by people of outstanding merit in different walks of life, may be the opening wedge that will topple over the ever-growing influence of the MacCarthys and other witch hunters who seem determined to throttle all freedom of thought and expression that doesn't coincide with their own crack-pot concepts, and, if this assumption is correct, then the news of this initial concerted effort is front page stuff and worthy of the widest publicity.

I haven't heard Ed. Morrow every night during the past week and so don't know if he has had anything to say on this matter. Sometimes I wish Mr. Morrow would devote two thirds of his broadcasts to plain news and the final third to his own opinion on some salient feature of the news, singled out from the batch of particulars reported in the first part of his broadcast. So often the ramifications of a single news item is so involved that the average listener like me inclines to feel he has been left dangling in dim air, after having been provided with a truck load of concrete news items, many of which seem to bear any precise relation as to where each is supposed to fit into the architectural pattern making up the day's doings, so that the keystone of the structure may often go unrecognized in the confusion of too ample a supply of secondary and third rate items.

In short, it seems to me a man like Mr. Morrow is occupying a place in radio not unlike the situation the New York Times holds in the newspaper field. We expect a newspaper to give us unbiased news plus an opinion, as voiced on the editorial page, tending to rationalize and clarify the paper's reaction to the day's events. I think Mr. Morrow should provide us with such a personal opinion, immediately following his news cast. After all, we turn to him for news because he is equipped to provide it, and by the same token, since he is in a position to know many side lights seldom if ever voiced on the air, he is holding back one of his most valuable assets when he fails to supply us with his personal opinion.

But after all this talk, I must get busy and sort out seed for tomorrow's planting at dawning, and so runs out the first work-a-day segment of the week.....

Tuesday, March 3rd, 1953.  
 in anticipation given concrete thought to the matter of the new  
 discovery that might eventually be made use of, and how  
 adversely the indicated existence of this potential  
 means. There is a certain dimness be-clouding the office  
 when I realize such selfishness and generosity. Yes, but  
 wrote at some length on the matter. He has communicated  
 Memorandum  
 with the art city, living in the 70's in manner. He  
 some unrelated materials dealing on the possibilities. He  
 proposed to find your Thursday letter in this  
 morning's post, together with several other pieces of  
 less interest, all of which should have come to hand  
 a day earlier, as I figure it.

But that they have eventually found their proper destination and that your nice newsy letter should have seemed through in perfect order makes me as happy as a clam. How sweet of you to twist the life business in the way you did and with such a finality that fulminations on my part, now that it is accomplished would seem both futile and ungracious. It is so pleasant however, to think that we shall thus have an opportunity to compare notes from time to time, and even when I do not remark about this or that item, there is always an added pleasure in turning through each issue in realizing that you, too, are investigating the same subject matter. But I do want to ask one favor, - and that is that we consider this gift covering the ensuing three years as standing for the birthdays ahead, for in view of all the business that has been going on in your immediate neighborhood, I should feel shame-faced indeed were I to be any farther in the cause of such an opulent outlay. And so my thanks again to you for this gift that will be with me weekly as the seasons come and go and I thank you again and again for being so kind to me.

And may I express my utter amazement at the brightness of your eyes, as revealed by all the details you caught in the snapshots forwarded from Rudolph's camera. I had draped the Mexican gift on the chair, after I had had it out for a dab of sunshine, following a bit of house cleaning and I was hoping it would register in the picture but somehow I never dreamed that your brightness of optic would catch such a detail. Yes, the business on the table on the gallery was a banquet setting for our feathered friends. I like to rig up such things during the winter months for they seem to enjoy feeding and drinking in such a sheltered place and it is always pleasant for me to see them so close to hand.



0362

5961

How sweet of Little Miss Lee to have to have so far in anticipation given concrete thought to the matter of the new discovery that might eventually be made use of, and how adroitly she indicated the existence of this potential means. There is a certain dimness be-clouding the optics when I realize such selflessness and generosity. Yes, Dora wrote at some length on the matter. He had communicated with the authority, living in the 70's in Manhattan and some unrelated authorities checking on the possibilities. He spoke of the matter after this correspondence had been finished, and said he would send it along to me or to some physician if I preferred. In thanking him, I suggested that Dr. Rand would be the person through whom the matter might be inaugurated, but prayed him to hold everything until the day-to-day shadow hanging over that household should have passed.

How insignificant seem such little handicaps when such possibilities of lessening them are in the offing and most of all, of what little importance such drawbacks seem when there are people such as you in this world.

And may I thank you for giving me the details concerning the matter that has been of paramount concern at the family hearth of late. I must say, in view of what little I have learned from other people confronted with the same problem, the solution seems wonderfully accomplished in the one you mention. I suppose much depends on the nature of the bone structure in each individual case and probably in the instance where the bone is but slightly out of whack, the whole thing may be the more readily corrected.

And thanks for advising me regarding the main features of Illustration's Noel number. Those particulars are adequate but I am glad to have them as I simply like to keep a mental tabulation of what appears as the successive seasons roll along.

The Associated Press out of Atlanta this morning talked about the blizzard raging from Minnesota to Louisiana but I saw none of the snow and what with the thermometer in the 80's, I guess it would have melted anyway if there had been any. The yellow German iris unfurls additional banners and the Gardner's Garter is rising like white foam from the damp earth. The mild weather begot Oklaho pilgrims but I didn't mind them as they were fairly intelligent and didn't linger too long.

So many things to talk about, including the Talking Book topics which came today bearing new listings. But this must do for now, but not before I say again how happy your Thursday has made my Tuesday.....

of mees yest rei wathen the winter months for they  
and enjoy feeding and drinking in such a sheltered place and  
if it is always close to hand.

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Memorandum:  
Wednesday, March 4th, 1953.  
I was interested to hear what he would have to say about the matter of the discovery that might eventually be made use of, and how adroitly she indicated the existence of this potential means. There is a certain dimness be-clouding the optics when I realize such selflessness and generosity. Yes, Dora wrote at some length on the matter. He had communicated with the authority, living in the 70's in Manhattan and some unrelated authorities checking on the possibilities. He spoke of the matter after this correspondence had been finished, and said he would send it along to me or to some physician if I preferred. In thanking him, I suggested that Dr. Rand would be the person through whom the matter might be inaugurated, but prayed him to hold everything until the day-to-day shadow hanging over that household should have passed.

And so the telephone rang this morning a little before 7, and it was Mrs. Hemingway, calling on behalf of Madam Rand to say the latter's mother, Mrs. White, had died yesterday afternoon and that the funeral would be this afternoon.

The weather was fair, or at least only partly cloudy and the thermometer in the 50's instead of yesterday's 80's.

And so my day turned out a little differently from expectations. I got in touch with Celeste who was glad to drive me down, and Madam Regard went along and spent a couple of hours with her sister-in-law in the Mother Cabrini Hospital while Celeste and I were at the funeral.

The arrangement worked out very nicely so far as location of things related the one to the other,--not the hospital but the funeral home where the body had been during the time for the services when it was removed to the Methodist Church which is just across the street.

We arrived at the funeral home,--a lovely large Federalist type of building, a half hour before services, and I was glad to be able to chat with Whitfield Jack, Blythe, a couple of her brothers and sisters and her sons, and a flock of people some of whom I knew and some I didn't. Mr. and Mrs. Holloman were among those I recognized. Bee and Gordon Randolph and so on.

The services at the Church were perfect, brief, simple and modest with one song by the choir, a brief prayer, a few remarks by the preacher, and the whole thing was done.

We did not go to the cemetery,--a couple of miles away across Red River in Pineville, but returned to the hospital to pick up Madam Regard and so found ourselves back home again by 6 o'clock which was much to my liking.



5963

5963

I listened with especial attention to Ed. Morrow tonight. I was interested to hear what he would have to say about the Stalin business. I thought he leaned over backward in his prediction that the death of a single individual really didn't alter things so very much. I was not quite prepared for that since I labor under the impression that quite often the eclipse of a major luminary, especially if he be a dictator, makes quite a lot of difference, perhaps not immediately, but surely in the long run. But be that as it may, let us hope there may be an enormous crack-up inside the Iron Curtain before long which ought to give the world quite a breather so far as ~~the~~ armaments and the attendant wasting of money on destructive engines and insane fripperies.

Just as I dotted the last sentence, the telephone rang. The operator said Alexandria was calling. I held the wire. In a minute somebody said hello, calling me by name. She said they had but recently arrived. I hadn't the vaguest notion as to the identity of the individual, --and said as much. It turned out to be Mrs. Howard of Dallas, heading toward Alabama with a friend and asking if they might stop to say howdy on their way back home sometime next week. It's wonderful how people can fade from one's mind and then suddenly re-appear on the surface again. But for me, I am always getting different impressions of people, seen but twice in succession, with months or years in between. The first time I met the Carrolls of Denver, I got the impression they were both crowding 70. The next time I saw them, they looked so different and Mrs. Carroll reminded me so much on the second go-round of that little Miss Brentano whom I had almost forgotten. I asked Celeste the other day if she remember Kay O'Brien on her visit here with Mrs. Storm. Celeste didn't see Kay on Sunday, and she said she remembered her as being about 40-ish. That was my impression on the first contact to which 20 years or more seemed to be added on the second visit. Sometimes these imperfect impressions are wonderfully confusing and I find myself thinking of "Lost Horizon" and the amazing transformations that took place so rapidly in people's appearances in that volume.

Two or three dowagers at the funeral whom I did not recognize, told me they were holding wall space for new Gane River plate designs and inquired when more would be available. Weather and the corpse seem to be the usual topic of conversation at funerals but this variation is subject matter was pleasant, too.....

5964

5964

Thursday, March 5th, 1953.

Memorandum:

Full summer has returned so far as brilliance of sunshine is concerned and while the temperature is just about right, the power of the sun is sufficient to give one an impressive tan. I saw J.H. for a few moments at mail time. He had much to report on aspects of life as viewed in Washington. Among other people with whom he was in contact was Secretary Benson whom he likes. His conference was cut short by the arrival of a message that Mrs. Benson had just suffered a severe automobile accident somewhere in Utah.

H. H. says that so many people in Washington, and especially the Democrats, foresee a depression as inevitable in the offing. It will be interesting to see if Mr. Eisenhower will make use of Mr. Roosevelt's blue prints for meeting such emergencies. I asked about lesser politicians' reaction to the President thus far. I gather they feel the President is trying out patience on the Congress with everyone wondering how long before his efforts are proved futile. In today's post for Celeste came a letter, addressed to "Mrs. C. G. Henry, Jr." It was from Mr. Belle, posted at Manganon, Burma, on February 22nd, and was in response to a Christmas card from her which he had received on the day he responded. I believe Celeste had posted her card, air mail, to him on December 15th. I got the impression things are on the point of seething in the Far East, which isn't precisely a new concept, although at best, one never gets more than an impression from anything Mr. Belle writes long hand, for even the experts have difficulty in guessing what he might be trying to spell out and after a word, as you know, has been properly deciphered, it may be phrased into a mixture of things that would make a strange line of talk. I must say I guess I am lucky if we do not exchange letters for years on end.

It was pleasant to hear from friend Postell to whom I wrote about the anniversary issue of the local paper, thinking he would be particularly interested. I have talked with the Mr. Reams he mentions



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in his letter, but only over the telephone. The man seems very promising, as I get the impression he is civilized and has some sense, too, --all of which seems so rare in the Library as well as in other professions.

According to the radio, another harbinger of Spring is making itself manifest every early morning and late evening, --not in Shreveport this year, but Alexandria, when millions of black birds converge on the city at sundown to nest in the trees over night and then take off again at dawn. I guess we left the place too early last evening to see them. We have a few hundred here, roosting in the bamboo. It has always interested me that these migratory birds, spending their days in the fields on their leisurely hops northward with the Spring, should invariably select urban centers for roosting places at night. Apparently they prefer to take their chances with gun fire, battles with the firemen's hose, etc., as opposed to risking limb and feather in the woods. Urban dwellers are apalled in the morning when they discover in the morning they cannot recognize their own cars, what with the complete covering that has blotted out recognizable signs from the birds' droppings. But I suppose the car washing places find the invasion helpful to their business, and the painters and re-finishers, too, since some acid in the droppings reportedly eats off the entire finish from the average car.

And speaking of strange doings, just as I was in the midst of the above paragraph, my phone rang in a dis-jointed sort of way to which I paid no attention, supposing it was a call for some one else. Another faint sort of a muffled business sounded, and after a second it occurred to me somebody might be trying to get me long distance, and so I picked up the receiver just as Celeste was saying: "Yes, Governor Long, I'll have J. H. call you as soon as he arrives". Perhaps saw the Governor's nephew in Washington, as I suppose he did, or perhaps the Governor wants to talk cows, none of which is any of my business.

I intended, --and may have already mentioned, how much I enjoyed the invitation to learning program last Sunday, having to do with the journalism of George Bernard Long. I have long admired Mr. Bryson, the moderator, and regretted we can't have at least 15 minutes of him daily. I suppose this program may come at an hour of pots and pans in your neighborhood, --11:30 your time, what a pity it isn't re-broadcast later in the day.

Some lovely daffodills are gently bobbing their heads in the silver jar in which they are standing here on my desk, and I tell myself they are looking straight past me and slap in the direction of little Miss Lee of whom they somehow remind me so much, what with their gaiety of manor and hearts of gold.....

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Mr. Trichell

Friday, March 6th, 1953.

Memorandum: saw that one of the Oakley ones was the last I had seen. How nice to find your Monday letter in today's post, and how kind of you to provide me with the map of Iowa and to mark it so clearly so that I could track down both Mount Vernon and Audubon just like one, two, three.

It did my heart good to know that everything went along so smoothly at the Sunday dinner. I sometimes think the only excuse for living is being with nice people, one of the best reasons for not living is being thrown with those who seem to delight in making a rumpus. After all, the glimpses provide man of Heaven and Hell seem to be pretty well typified by associations with those who want to be pleasant and those who don't. That is why I wish the disagreeable ones would go on "home", since Hell seems to be a family hearth where the racket is perpetual. But in my own case, I suppose I appreciate the Heaven segments the more when the hell raisers have gone on their way, so perhaps I should never consider the couple contributing greater appreciation of Heaven by the contrast they provide by a mere visitation.

I'm so glad you gave me the menu for I enjoy picturing the repast in my own mind which I can do the more readily since by chance we today had two or three of the same items, including the candied sweet potatoes which Juanita makes to perfection and lemon pie which we had today, too.

The morning post also brought the final designs for the Oakley and the Matchitoches plates. The latter seems to me to be especially satisfying. There seem to be a few minor errors which I can correct easily enough, including the re-drawing of the Williams house, which means I shall not have to return it and so take up more time. The Audubon-Oakley design wasn't so successful but I can alter it alright, but all this means that we shall not be able to get them photographed at this stage of the game. Perhaps after my corrections have been incorporated at Rock Hall and the final sketch has been returned to me for approval, I can send them along to you for photographing, although the time element, especially in the Oakley one is so pressing that I am hoping Rock Hall will not return it to me. I shall speak more on this score at some



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subsequent sitting. I have the African House design which could be photographed, and I shall perhaps send it along within a few days, although that is the only one about which there is no rush.

The thing about the Oakley one that was a bit startling was the fact that instead of enclosing the title in a cartouche, the letters encircled the design, running all around the thing like a border, the letters being at least an inch in height. It is a lone title: - "Audubon Memorial State Park, Oakley Plantation, St. Francisville, Louisiana."

Perhaps all that will not go into a cartouche, but in any event the large letters encircling the design, makes the prospective plate look like an advertisement, and I don't want that.

Among today's pilgrims were some college professors, a couple of whom, it developed, were Russians. They were perfectly entranced on reaching the Studio where little Miss Alberta used to paint, on discovering the old samovar on the marble top dresser. There is much writing in Russian on the old piece, if you recall. In Russian the inscription states that the samovar was fashioned at Tula, perhaps Tola, or Toulia, under patronage of the Tsar, etc., etc.

It was interesting to hear the pilgrims discuss the matter and to see how moved they were by this souvenir of the old Imperial days. They didn't speak English much but their French was fluent enough. I suppose they may teach Romance languages in college. The old British expression demonstrating the height of futility and folly came to my mind, --you recall the one, "Carrying coals to Newcastle", --the point being that as Newcastle was the center of the coal mining industry in the old days, anybody was a chump who would carry coal to such a place. It seems that the Russians had a parallel saying to the same point, --"Carrying samovars to Tula", for in Imperial Russia, Tula (however it is spelled) was situated not too many miles from Moscow and that the finest samovars in Russia were manufactured there, both for general trade and for the Imperial family, so that anyone carrying samovars in that direction might well have his head examined. Of course, I might as well break down and admit that I always thought anybody traveling in any direction ought to have his head examined if he included such an unwieldy thing as a samovar among his paraphernalia, but apparently, and confirmed by the 19th century Russian noelists, nobody ever dreamed of starting for anyplace, -- except Tula, -- without a samovar under his arm.

But how I have run on about this matter. Again my thanks for such a happy day, and all because of the M

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Sunday, March 8th, 1953.

Memorandum:

The Weather Man had said rain, but it has been perfectly lovely cloudless weather all through Saturday and Sunday. If I had any influence with the "Gentleman" who passes out the schedule, I guess I would be asking for torrents all next weekend, since the Times issue, carrying so many pictures of places in town and up and down the river, there will probably be droves of people out to take a look at the Parish in which most of them have spent all their lives and haven't seen yet. But there is a chance that there will be so many other attractive bands of the river that Melrose may escape visitors completely, rain or shine.

I don't see how I was so slow in discovering that Matchitoch was host to educators from all over the Gulf area this week end. Had I known about it in advance, I certainly would have made no appointments. For people began coming early Saturday morning, and before the day had played out, I had about run down so far as receiving people went.

The real crush reached its full strength about 2 or 3 o'clock, when I had a flock of Shreveport stupidities plus a dozen or so L. S. U. Librarians and a flock of Lafayette, New Orleans and Mississippi people.

It all went along alright but there were too many people for a single go-round and when the Mayor and his wife arrived, I just waved them to Yucca where I eventually joined them and we all could relax over a glass of port before the dinner or rather the super bell rang.

The Librarian of L. S. U., whose name is Lisle or Lyle or some such, was making his first visit here. I received him with all cordiality and even let him look at the books in Yucca where I provided him and some of his associates with wine glasses while I went to speed some of those on their way who had arrived before the L. S. U. contingent. In showing them the other buildings, I was particular not to let him see the scrapbooks, but I did serve as their host in the library in which place I made the most of the opportunity to give them a



short speech in which I expounded my position regarding the reasons why I thought Melrose was the place for the Melrose library, assuring them I should not welcome any effort on anyone's part to pry the books out of here for any other institution, for, with perhaps more sarcasm than I had intended, I pointed out that while books were the big thing in the lives of most of us people, interested in books, still, as in the present set-up, there are times when books are not more than an integral part of a larger institution and they must not let their enthusiasm for the Melrose collection get them off the track by trying to wreck an institution which symbolized something greater than a few thousand volumes from here, shelved in some vaster collection of printed material.

I was frankly tired when the day was done and I wasn't too anxious to receive a new batch after a batch today, but they came and I received them and I have survived.. It would be so easy to welcome those who are genuinely interested if one didn't have to be all cluttered up with a vaster majority to whom Melrose means no more than it does to a Henry.

Along about 4 o'clock Saturday afternoon, 3 three young gentlemen of color, somewhere up the road between here and Bermuda, got into a scuffle over a dollar and a half. I guess they all must have been armed, --the brothers Jackson and Jesse Machette, who is little Sam's uncle. Be that as it may one of the Jacksons got shot in the leg, the bullet going down along the bone and coming out at the knee. The Machette boy got 9 bullets in him, his abdomen slit open and one bullet through the backbone, the spinal cord being severed. The other Jackson boy fell dead on the spot. It is true that Spring weather is upon us but usually it is the real hot deep summer weather that brings out religious impulses and short tempers. Apparently we are really running ahead of schedule this winterless winter.

I can't think why I am so pleased to have learned about the old Russian adage: "Don't toast smovars to Toulka", but perhaps it is because it supplies such a variation in all the news coming out of the Kremlin these days, --or is there any. When I hear from broadcasts that millions of people are standing in line to get one look at the corpse of Stalin, another adage comes to mind: "People get the kind of government they deserve."

There's no moon tonight but Venus is glowing in the west, almost bright enough to cast a shadow. I assume it has been another busy week end for you, but I am hoping you found a moment or two in which you could catch a little slice of privacy.....

months until the lady takes it back. and I still put it in its box and park it somewhere for the next few golden bees. The piece, although very fine, has no place at present. The shape is of stretched red taffeta, sprinkled over with in homes. The promise is almost black and pale beautiful while lamp with a mixture of the earlier form of the bronze figures of the base of the pithos may be able to determine the precise meaning of some of the signs me to use for a few months in hopes that some passing home made candy and -- of all things, -- her pet bronze lamp, which

Memorandum;  
In this morning's mail, along with Sunday memo, I sent the final sketch of the African house. Perhaps it arrived with Sunday's memo, perhaps it travels a little slower. The point I wanted to make is that there's no rush about having this sketch photographed, in fact it isn't imperative that it be photographed at all, for we can always substitute other items for publicity, and I think for the Matchitoches paper, it will be fully as well to use the sketch of the town of Matchitoches, when it becomes available, which, I suppose, may be within the next two or three weeks. If you feel the African house should be photographed too, you can just as well hold it to be photographed when the town of Matchitoches is "struck". I merely sent the thing along at this unexpected opportunity in order that you might be kept abreast with doings generally and I pray you not to put yourself to any inconvenience about it. When through with the thing, it might be sent, not to me, but to  
Mrs. Elisabeth Edwards Copworthwaite,  
Edwards China and Glassware Co.,  
Rock Hall, Kent County,  
Maryland.

It has been cloudy all day with now and then a minute drizzle that didn't hold up plantation ploughing of cotton fields, spraying of pecan orchards or operations of the power lawn mowers which put the final stamp on the record as to the advent of Spring, for surely of all seasonal sounds, nothing so convincing as to the final arrival of a new season is the sound of lawn mowers buzzing around along about this time in March.

Today has been distinctive to a degree for me by the bringing of different things that interested me very slightly by this person or that who wanted me to inspect and, perhaps, admire, La Maybry arrived heavily weighted down with magazines, clippings,



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home made candy and, --of all things, --her pet bronze lamp, which she asks me to use for a few months in hopes that some passing pilgrim may be able to determine the precise meaning of some of the symbolism incorporated in the bronze figures of the base of the lamp which is a replica in miniature of the Barberini Fountain in Rome. The bronze is almost black and quite beautiful while the shade is of stretched red taffeta, sprinkled over with golden bees. The piece, although very fine, has no place at Yucca, and I shall put it in its box and park it somewhere for the next few months until the lady takes it back.

La Maybry is planning to run down to Oakley on the morrow and thought I would be interested in accompanying her, but I wasn't, and I must accord the lady one virtue, in that she did not press the matter.

And then came Alton Johnston, the negro boy who does the carving. I had suggested he try his hand at making a little African house, having in mind something that might lend itself in size of 6 or 8 inches, to a desk ornament that might hold cigarettes or some such. Pictue my surprise when he brought forth an African house a little more than two feet in size. Surely there wouldn't be so much left on a desk after such an edifice had been super-imposed on top. But he did a nice job of it and eventually I shall consign the thing to Ellen Locekt or some such individual for a doll house. I have envisioned a Canal River Art Show for May if pilgrims get into my hair not too much between now and then.

In Sunday's Invitation to Learning, Mr. Bryson, during the discussion of Andre Gide's Counterfitters, remarked that he had never been able to get very fascinated by the novel, and I knew exactly what difficulties he had encountered, for I, too, have never been able to get beyond a page or two of the book and have always marveled that other people could find it so absorbing.

Next Sunday they are going to have Eva LeGallienne as guest and Chekov's Three Sisters will be the subject for discussion. I think this should be an interesting meeting and I am hoping circumstances enable me to have a go at it. I suppose the hour of 11:30 is not a convenient one for you to hear this program. Why in the world don't they re-broadcast such worth while material, I wonder.

Celeste told me today she is certainly going on the St. Francisville pilgrimage on April 12 and 13th, which surprised me not at all but filled me with wonder. There must be a fascination in crowds and tumult for her, for she knows some of the people down there having old houses whom she could go and call on or visit any time she pleased. But she wants to go to the pilgrimage, taking 4 or 5 people with her, and there's no accounting for taste, I must say.....

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5972

Tuesday, March 10th, 1953.

Memorandum:

How nice to have your Thursday letter in today's post.

And first off, may I thank you for having so thoughtfully made me acquainted with the several aspects of the recent difficulties. I am under the impression you may have smothered over some of the more deplorable elements of the aftermath, but it is so characteristically kind of you to give me a glimpse of some of the major outlines and I only hope that some of the minor ones did not mount up, when taken all in all, into something that is impossible to stagger under. Naturally the recent birthday gift of Life and the possible photographic business in the offing were points that played heavily on my mind as I gave consideration to other and more pressing matters in your immediate surroundings. Your account of things eases my mind a little and I keep telling myself that the understanding is so perfect that each of us will always feel quite free to say so when circumstances are such that this or that strain should be kept as light as possible, or at least not added to.

That no news should have been forthcoming from Warren Morehouse would suggest that he is making it. I am so glad you set me straight regarding the occasion for his name having been in the news a while back I expect that he had been married to some Georgia gal was what I had heard from your original report but I had confused the marriage with an obituary notice, which, I trust, is really quite different.

And may I thank you for telling me about the freesias. It was so remarkable that you should have remembered them as one of my delights so long ago. I have had a go at raising them here but they are really a tropical plant and require a bit more attention than I was able to give them at the time, which, I suppose, was along in 1947. I am under the impression that I could make a go of them by keeping an eye on them when the weather was on the chilly side, just tucking them away in that little place along there by the side gate when the thermometer got to dipping a little too low. I know of no one in Louisiana who has ever had any success with them, but before we go into the matter, let me cast about a little with some of our botanical friends and see what the chance may be. I shall report on



5973

5973

Wednesday, March 11th, 1953.

this point within the next few weeks after I have consulted  
with one or two of the experts.

I laughed at the thought of how many people were probably  
screaming tonight after hearing Lowell Thomas say that  
the Lone Star State had a million dollar rain today, the rain  
having spread all across the State from "San Antonio to  
Shreveport". So far as I am concerned, Texas can have Shreveport  
any time it wishes, but perhaps some of the Shreveport residents might  
not subscribe to such an idea.

Be that as it may, the rains did fall all day, having begun  
last night and continuing throughout the day and it is still  
raining tonight. Celeste had some special friends coming from  
some place, -- an A. S. A. executive and his wife. The  
plan was for Celeste and Madam Regard to dine in town at noon with  
the people at the home of district attorney Hughes, after which they  
all would repair to "elrose" for dessert at Celeste and then have  
a tour. The schedule was carried through as far as Celeste's  
but there the presence of water converting the gardens into a  
green mud puddle, the tour was put off for another visit, and  
so J. A. and I joined the party for but a brief go at dessert,  
after which we both withdrew, -- he to some place, perhaps  
Alexandria and I to Iruca where a couple of guests were already  
awaiting me. They were Mrs. Howard and some lady from Dallas,  
who had reached Matchitoches on their way home from Mobile, and  
wanted to come out to say howdy. They are kind souls and apparently  
quite brave, -- to negotiate the cane river country in such  
a dampish situation.

If La Mabry made the jaunt to St. Francisville, she certainly  
had lots of dampness along the way, quite aside from the Mississippi  
crossing. I perhaps did not mention yesterday that she spoke  
of going to see Mr. Columbus, a railroad man who has a fine garden  
in the suburb of Marshall. She said he wanted her to bring  
me a present of a pink lilac bush from him, as I had given him such  
lovely pink crepe myrtles when he was here with some of Celeste's  
friends one July a year or so back. I certainly wouldn't be giving  
anybody crepe myrtle trees in July and I never gave him any in  
December. He must have me mixed up in his mind with someone else,  
but it will be nice to have the lilac regardless.

And speaking of Celeste, it is nice to know you have heard from  
her. In response to your inquiry, I think she has not given up  
the European jaunt, but she doesn't like to be weighted down with  
information about places on impending trips and so never mentions  
it. I shouldn't be surprised if she does go, -- but nobody, including  
herself, could tell until the last minute, but my guess is that  
she does plan the jaunt, especially if the B. Ruma B.

5974

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Wednesday, March 11th, 1953.

#### Memorandum:

According to my radio, the Flower Show is in full swing, --  
I suppose at Grand Central Palace.

Locally there is nothing very spectacular for a show, but I must say the white wisteria bushes, both at Arenhought  
and Iruca, are quite lovely and somehow put me in mind of  
what a Gay '90 fountain might have looked like, had the gay '90's  
ever gone in for floral jets.

The yesterday's drizzle continued throughout the night  
and up until noon, -- with four and a half inches falling in  
this area. The weather remains warm and the sky overcast.  
The promise is for "widely scattered showers" on the morrow.  
The warmth and dampness have conspired to give the garden  
a twist, definitely taking off the barren edges of winter  
as the Chinese magnolias come into full leaf. The bumble bees  
are in full swing, too, with sawdust sifting down from the  
rafters on both galleries at a great rate.

Miss Vaughn of the Shreveport Library came to see me during  
the morning. She is Chairman of the Louisiana Purchase Committee  
Celebration something or other in Shreveport and had come down  
to contact J. A. to see about borrowing some 1803 stuff.  
from the Melrose Library. He told her he knew nothing about  
such things and sent her to see me.

It seems they want some stuff for May, so I take it they are  
going to beat the drum a little earlier than New Orleans.

The lady was hoping to get invited for the noon day meal, I  
think, but I had some ditching I wanted to attack during  
the afternoon and so I made the most of the excitement when  
I heard a pig squealing and I terminated the interview to go  
and give encouragement to Jackson who had the porker by the tail, --  
the pig screaming with terror and trying to pull himself away while  
Jackson was bracing himself against being pulled, and what with  
the quagmire in which they found themselves, neither one budged and ch.  
although the legs of the pig were going through the motions of  
running while the mud was making a perfect bread mill so that  
no matter how fast the legs operated, neither animal budged.



5975

Wednesday, March 11th, 1953.

The letter from little Miss Ramsey speaks for itself. I seem to have lost all enthusiasm for attempting anything in that direction, it seems to take so long to bring anything to the boiling stage. As a matter of fact, while she herself has actually done things for publication, she hasn't ever rigged up her pictures to go with articles we have attempted and I am not worrying myself about when the next move, if any, is made. I shall advise her there are no flowers to be photographed on the first of April and she will be delighted for that will provide her with an added excuse to put off the trip a little further. With the Chinese magnolias photographed and plenty of shots of other blossoms, --bulbs especially, and no end of pictures of the various houses, I can't see for the life of me why the stuff can't go forward without waiting until, say, the crepe myrtles are at their best, which will be June or July.

What I could have remarked in my letter to her that would suggest I was interested in doing a book on Cane River with her, I cannot imagine. It takes 10 years to get no where on an article, and therefore a book ought to require at least a century. I should calculate.

Then, too, little Miss Ramsey is going to just plain collapse when she sees the Matchitoches rimes and the Melrose article.

In a roundabout fashion, I learned today that Charles Cunningham is contemplating using much of the material on the Cane River subject matter in the paper as a basis for a booklet and that if he is threatening to telephone me shortly to ask if I will lend a hand. I am glad to learn about this in advance so I can be studying up a point or two before the matter is brought to the surface.

I enclose a note from him today which has nothing to do with that matter, however. I know not when I shall get my copies of the rimes but hope I may do so by the week end, so yours may get on their way by Saturday's post at the latest, but I know not what the business and pleasure departments are rigging up on their respective calendars for Thursday and Friday, and mailing any from here will of course depend upon when they actually come to hand.

It is drizzling again and I guess I had better skip out and dip a few palefuls of water out of the pot, for while there's no danger of the gold fish drowning, there's a pretty good bet that they might readily slip over the edge, what with water all a-drip all around the edge. Hope Spring is being friendly to your neighborhood, too, without quite so much moisture.....

5976

I intended mentioned a day or two ago that I had mentioned the information of the last book by Frances Harrison-Lewis and the description of an old plantation along the Mississippi River as a basis for a book. I had intended to mention this in my letter to her but I forgot. I had intended to mention this in my letter to her but I forgot. I had intended to mention this in my letter to her but I forgot.

Thursday, March 12th, 1953.

Memorandum:

A complete cloud coverage, with the thermometer in the 70's and the humidity at 98 and 44 one hundredths, so that everything and everybody is steaming.

Poor Juanita has tooth troubles and remained at home today and therefore I dined and a ped across the fence which was very pleasant.

This afternoon Blythe appeared, bringing Natalie Scott with her. Blythe said it was her first trip out of town and I was glad to see this first break in her prolonged vigil, dating back for quite a while. I last saw Nathalie Scott in January, 1951. She had been staying for a while with Martha Robinson in New Orleans and is heading back for Tasko in a couple of days.

Blythe brought some Taylor's Sherry which Natalie likes and a package in Reynolds's aluminum, containing three or four dozen cream cheese sandwiches made from white bread sprinkled through with small walnut pieces, and I'm glad some were left, following our sitting, so that I may fortify myself with them and a glass of milk.

Naturally in talking of everything under the sun, we somehow skipped any mention of the funeral and I was glad when

A slight interruption at this point, --first a telephone call from town, a d as I returned the receiver, another call, and so much chatter ensued that I forgotten what, --if anything, --I was talking about. The telephone calls were from towns people who had seen the pictures in the Times. It seems the thing is printed, as described by them, as in the format of a magazine section of a Sunday paper and they say the photographs reproduced very nicely.



5977

I intended mentioned a day or two ago that Ora had mentioned the introduction of the last book by Frances Parkingson Keyes and the description of an old plantation along the Mississippi, known as Cindy-lou, the author explaining that Cindy-lou was a corruption in pronunciation by the negroes, the original name of the place being Saint Cloud. If he reads that Keyes book, that will really upset Dora, I reckon. I guess the Cindy-lou business is some made up thing by la Keyes, for I never heard of a plantation bearing such a name although the seat of the Bourbon restoration being at Saint Cloud in the 1830's, it wouldn't be at all surprising if somebody had given a plantation such a name.

I should like to see a list of all the names of plantations in any given county in Mississippi or Louisiana. Many of them might be listed under various names, depending upon the whims of successive owners. Sometimes plantations must have been split up into various parcels of land and so become almost impossible to trace, except after endless research. I never did find Tilsit, for example, in the 2nd Creek area.

And this leads me to refer to some of the curious specifications in the original land grants. La Mabry remarks that the Spanish grant covering her property to the west of Matchitoches, describes it as starting from a certain point and "running west - Northwest to the point that would be reached by walking until a cigar, being lighted at the starting point, would have been completely smoked". That seems about as definite as the one near Washington, Miss., described as all that land which the eye can see from a certain low hill at the beginning of the property. No wonder the legal minds of the lawyers employed by oil companies to determine the extent of oil leases based on original grants really have quite a time for themselves.

The enclosures speak for themselves. I can't imagine how Mrs. Moore could write "misere" letters to poor Miss Melie.

As for the one from Dora, I am impressed by the 1853 date given for the founding of Mount Vernon from scratch, as quoted in his letter. If memory serves me correctly, Audubon was journeying up the Missouri in 1845 in July when he noted on the picture of the deer's head that it was painted that day "at Mount Vernon", suggesting there must have been something there prior to 1853. So things turn and now for a sandwich and a bit of "shut-eye".....

5978

Friday, March 13th, 1953.

Memorandum:

The sun has been out today at this bend of the river, although according to my radio you all had the worst deluge in his ry.

Locally the bayous are up and what with the heat on the increase, everything is steaming and growing mightily.

Three Matchitoches times go forward to you under separate cover in this mail.

I seem to be quite disappointed in the issue, having understood it was to be rather more exhaustive than it turns out to be. But aside from the paucity of particulars, there are many points of interest and many of the bits of data, --although it appears mostly in bit form, and many of the sketches may well be of convenience and even value in some future enterprise. And so I guess the thing is worth preservation even though it fell far short of expectations.

Instead of getting the twenty five copies promised, I received but ten. I shall be able to round up a few more from acquaintances in town and so shall have an ample supply for my needs which, in turn, are considerably reduced, in view of the material that eventually came to hand. Anticipating your offer to return one of your copies, which would be just exactly like you, let me hasten to say that I shall have no need for it, the ones which have already been promised me in town being altogether adequate for my purposes.

This morning I made a round to see about the grandiflora magnolia which had been felled recently. Its trunk had been sawed up and carted off. Immediately I singled the grapevine to see if I could find any pieces that had not gone into making a fire for somebody during these recent damp days. I tracked down two pretty good sized pieces and these I shall turn over to Alton Earle Johnston, the negro youth so adept at carving things, and so likely to forego carving for carpentry if not supervised. How the carving artist will like working with magnolia, I know not, but he can try. I think, in spite of its slowness of growth, the wood of the magnolia is inclined to be rather soft. I shall send word for the youth to pass this way and we shall see what we can make of the rescued sections.



2382

5979

Friday, March 15th, 1953.

The enclosure seems to follow about the usual line. The pertinent sentence is the one having to do with the "discontentment strike". Ever since she thought she had pulled a smart trick by employing the demented creature, discharged from the Melrose kitchen, I have wondered which lunatic would crack up first, and I take it color had to give way to white in a tug-of-war under the same roof.

I may have mentioned yesterday that another sign of Spring is manifest at the spillway where big old fish are negotiating the barrier from the lower level of the bayou to the upper level of Cane River. There was quite a crowd around the place along about first dark last night and the fish were so plentiful at time, they could be grabbed by any pair of apt hands. Beau Mack told me he caught a nice one between 2 and 3 feet in length. You may be sure there were plenty of gigs being put to use, too. The Game Warden passed that way around 10 or 11 o'clock and found a gig on Mitchell, the axe. I believe there is a ten dollar fine and Mitchell made a brief trip to town this morning to attend to his payment.

Juanita is better but will not return to her pots and pans until the morrow, although she wanted to return today. I am under the impression Aurellia was guilty of an error in judgement when she declined to come to cook at the big house during Juanita's two days absence. I can't blame Aurellia for not going back to work across the fence but I think she would have made a happier choice if she had come forward to lend a hand at the big house. It must be admitted that once Aurellia has made up her mind to something, she is certainly hard headed, but, by and large, that is probably her saving grace, for if she hadn't possessed just those qualities all these years, she would have been sunk years ago.

Collier's for March 21st, according to the New Orleans radio, is carrying an article by Bernard Le Voto about the Louisiana Purchase, running through several pages, and I suppose the March 21st issue should be out soon. I believe we get it around here and I shall inquire, but I mention it to you, thinking you might like to keep an eye out for it, should you not chance to see every week's copy. We are promised thunder storms for this week end, which may contribute to peace. I hope peace without thunder storms may be the lot of little Miss Lee over the same period.....

2381

5980

Sunday, March 15th, 1953.

Memorandum:

What a busy week end, with the weather trotting out a variety of arrangements that were sufficiently varied to make each turn of the hour glass record something excessive and different.

Saturday saw 3 or 4 inches of rain. But the temperature remained warm. The bayou sections continue to be further inundated by water which will rise further within the next 3 or 4 days as the water trickles down from the Montrose hills, but there is no danger of a flood, I think.

The deluge wasn't sufficient to discourage all pilgrims but it kept down the numbers. On Saturday night there was much blustering on the part of the wind, and while it blew things around a bit, it never reached tornado proportions in this area.

This morning dawned cloudless and the flow of pilgrims was excessive until dark.

There was a coincidence or two that tended to lighten the observation a bit, but I am frankly sleepy enough tonight to preclude the necessity of being "rocked by a cow" to induce sleep.

The third or fourth group arriving after dinner today included a lady from Caspar, Wyoming. She seemed a bit startled when I told her on shaking hands that I suspected she bred fine Siamese cats, for I thought I recognized her voice as having said as much over the radio from Brennon's restaurant in Bourbon on a 9:30 broadcast a week ago. She confessed that she had been guilty of such an "airing" and said she had come here because some one that night had spoken of the place so enthusiastically. I recall that Alonso Landsford had been on the air from the same place on that night, and perhaps he had been the person to seek of the Matchitioches country.



0882

5981

In the next group I undertook to impart the glories, --they numbered 7, -- I was told that two of the people hailed from Iowa. I told the man and his wife they were precisely the people I had been waiting to see and that by some clairvoyance I could not explain, I felt they lived in the neighborhood of Mount Vernon. They both nearly collapsed on the spot, for they lived 3 miles from the center of town and had never supposed anybody outside of Iowa had ever heard of Mount Vernon. From them, I got the name of Dr. Russell Cole, President of Cornell College, to whom I shall write about an Audubon Memorial plate, don't you think so. I thought this chance meeting, in view of all the talk about Mount Vernon was odd indeed.

But there were other pilgrims and still others, and along about 4, when I thought I was done with the business, I staggered back to Ruca, shouting as I entered my boudoir:

"If I ever seen another pilgrim....." when, Lo! I discovered there were three people sitting in the living room, --all of whom exploded in merriment at my chatter to myself. It was the lady doctor, her husband and a friend. Dr. Eleanor eyed me some what professionally and told me to go to the car and bring in the thermos bottle of Martinis, for obviously I needed a pick up. Don complied and as he and the guest required the same medicine, the three of us had a short while Dr. Eleanor, declining, related many an episode of current town doings and the half hour of their visit passed swiftly enough. I was glad of the pick up, took for as I turned back from the side gate on saying goodbye to them, I was confronted by a youthful physician from Alabama and two or three acquaintances. Thus the day spelled itself out until first dark, when I crossed the fence for supper, -- and here I am now.

The lady doctor had brought me a note from Beaufort where she had paused on her way down here. I shall enclose the note from Beth. She takes the opportunity to thank me for my gift. She refers to a plate of the Cane River Country which I sent her when it came out, --which must have been months ago. Frankly, I didn't know she knew how to write, but this note indicates she has at least been instructed in forming words.

I was sorry Ora's article didn't get into the magazine section, for I think it the best in the paper. I must say the swell article was well done, too. Since he can write, why does he have to do "birds and bees" stuff. But it is time to fold, although I must knock off a few letters as to Miss Nellie, Charles, Miss Kate, etc., and then to bed....

8882

5982

Monday, March 16th, 1953.

**Memorandum:**

More clouds, more drizzle, more greenery, with the explosions of purple in the direction of the wisteria in ever increasing intensity and the white wisteria suspending longer and longer clusters, redolent with a perfume like honey and withal quite a-buzz with billions of bees.

Every day presents its reasons for thanksgiving and I am so grateful that the pilgrimage pattern of yesterday didn't prevent me from hearing the LeGallienne direct quotes and observations concerning Chekov's "The Three Sisters".

I hope you heard it, too, and if you did, I am sure you were impressed by the reasons for the existence of the three sisters, perhaps the only three cultivated people living in a city of a hundred thousands souls, with all the other 999,997 being dolts of the first water. There was something about it reminding me of certain recent correspondence in which the remark was made that one sometimes wonders why this or that line of endeavor seems to go on without offering any particular excuse for itself. As was stressed in the Sunday program, the wonderful thing about the presence of the three sisters in the town, keeping bright the flame of civilization, is the fact that people coming in their train will appear because

they cultivated the field, and after the 9 will come 81, and so will civilization spread for the delegation of the many because the few had the courage to hold high their lamps on their solitary journeys. I thought the idea so pleasant and it goes without saying that the mental telepathy department was working over time but madly.

I learned today that had I not had so many cars in front of the gate yesterday, I might have had other visitors. Believing as I do that five cent cigars should be handed a palm whenever they attempt something outside the making of money, I penned J. H. Williams a line of congratulation on the article which actually Ora had put in presentable form. It seems he was so entranced with the letter, he dropped everything and headed down with way to thanks me, but seeing so many people here, beat an immediate retreat.



5983

In the reading department, I continue to flounder around with nothing of especial interest to keep me awake when I get around to call it a day.

To hand has come something or other called "The Magnificent Century" which I hoped might be the 17th but which turns out to be 1,200 or some such, with England as the base of the scuffling. I guess the twelve hundreds were about as exciting years as any but except for the vast amount of church building that went on all across Europe, "magnificent" seems to be an adjective that isn't especially suited.

I think I did not get around to mention one amusing bit of chit-chat coming to hand yesterday during the visit of the lady doctor. In speaking of the Germans, she remarked that she had felt as though her office had been invaded during the visit of the Briarwood gals bent on seeking professional service. For it seems that Caroline on each go-round has rushed through the waiting room, heavily populated with people, bearing an impressive bouquet of flowers which she pressed into the lady doctor's face after entering the consulting room, exclaiming on the beauty of God's creation and then seemingly with casualness to remark that since she had already achieved the sanctum sanctorum, she might as well stay and have the doctor take care of her ailments. But it seems the lady doctor wasn't so easily bowled over on either occasion and after thanking her for the floral offering, recommended with some firmness that she retire to the waiting room to await her turn. The hilarious aspect of the business is the fact of that of all the people in the world who apparently have nothing to do and all day to do it, Caroline is that person so far as her own evaluation of time goes, and yet she is the first one to think up a polite bump rush to clip off a sitting while awaiting the contact with her physician.

The somewhat endless enclosure is of no interest but I send it along regardless, and if you read it or not you will have lost or gained nothing. It seems to give some side light on what one young gentleman has to get through life in San Francisco. Apparently he is enjoying it all, and perhaps that is all that matters. The whole existence seems a little pointless at the moment, but much less so than a flock of people around here who find ev less in San Francisco although even that source reports it as "a darling place".....

5984

Tuesday, March 17th, 1953.

Memorandum:

If your weather was like ours today, your Irish fellow citizens had ample sunshine to parade up 5th Avenue and get high on 1st, 2nd and 3rd, both of which lines of endeavor seems to have long typified Manhattan St. Patrick's Day.

And today was the wedding anniversary of the R. D. R.'s, and I hope it was filled with lots of happy memories for the lady.

Last night I believe I reported the death of one Cleveland Burden, -- "Manuel's cousin". And since then I have heard two or three people of color speaking of "Manuel's cousin" and especially "Manuel's wife". It seems the funeral will not be held until this week end, which seems laggardly enough in view of the speed white folks go in for. And then there is the matter of Clemence and it is said that last week, "Manuel's cousin", becoming possessed of the idea that his days were numbered, drew Clemence's Old Age Pension money he had been holding, and presented it to her, and along with the money, a mighty fine cow, and so that association seems to have come to a termination differing much from former marriages and definitely on the surprise side to everybody, including, of all people, I suppose, one Clemence.

On the home front the most difficult problem at the moment is the food situation. Each day we all agree we are going to cut down on the amount consumed and each day Junita sits up dinners and suppers more delectable than those of the day before, and all our good wishes come to naught as our bodies expand to alarming proportions. I am now trying a new method of diet, sticking more or less to a single dish, on the assumption that by tasting a variety of different ones, I probably would eat more than if I restricted myself to only one or two. At dinner I couldn't resist the soup which was wonderful, but I did jump the rice, candied sweet potatoes, cold cabbage salad with tons of dressing, corn muffins, hot rolls, spaghetti and meat balls, spinach and corn fritters, but I did have a go at a big old pork chop, and thought I was going to say "But, no" to a dessert, but when it turned out to be a marvelous bread pudding, with elegant flavoring including nutmeg and spice and a cream covering, I just through in the sponge and admit that I was sunk before getting well started. Out of habit, I



5985

1882

Wednesday, March 17th, 1953.

I sipped at a demi-tasse, but I was already so stuffed I couldn't even finish the coffee. But these are busy days in physical exertion so perhaps I should complain too much about the excellence of the food and the extra weight I seem to be rounding up.

But enough of all this food talk. And the worst part of it is that I begin to feel myself feeling hungry.

On Sunday J. A. remarked that the paper carried an announcement of the death of Mr. Wilkinson of the M. S. V. Press. I reckon Manhattan papers may have carried it, too, but I pass it along just in case they didn't.

Only last week I had written Martha Robinson that under no consideration was the Melrose manuscript to be submitted to M. S. V. Press. Now that the President of the Press will be a new personality and, let us hope, not too intimate terms with the S. G. Henrys, I seem to find myself a little more different on that score.

Ora telephoned me today to thank me for having so highly recommended the lady doctor to her consideration years ago. Ora's physician, Dr. Goreoran, or some such, dropped dead the other day and so the lady doctor had been consulted. Ora said she liked everything about Dr. Eleanor and that she left the consulting room feeling that her case had been taken under consideration by a sympathetic and intelligent physician. In view of the Dorman entry into the Worsley office, as mentioned in a Memorandum of a day or so back, it is interesting to remark that Ora, knowing nothing about that, said to me that one of the things she liked best started slap at the outset, following her arrival in the waiting room. An old colored woman had arrived just a little before her, and when the lady doctor appeared, she smiled at both

patients, --she has known Ora socially for years, --and learning from the secretary which of the ladies had arrived first, asked the old colored woman to come in first. Right then and there she knew she was in contact with just the kind of a physician she wanted to establish professional relations with.

I didn't do much radio listening last night and I expect to do even less tonight, but I can always skip miscel programs on St. Patrick's Day, since they naturally are all Irish ditties and I must say I would never push Grandma out of the window for the majority of them. I hope you were able to negotiate cross town alright today, what with the inevitable parade. I have thought of you so often....

5986

1882

Hadrian's Villa

Wednesday, March 18th, 1953.

How nice to have your letter of the 14th. It was such a lovely chat and, as always, I not only learned so much but gained so much pleasure that the day, already radiant, seems to be equally so even though the sun has already slid below the Montrose hills.

I can well imagine how pleasant it must have been to have a little brother on Saturday, and I reckon the promise of such was worth the sacrifice of the Sabbath.

One sometimes wonders in view of the busy days from Monday through Friday if a declaration of independence wouldn't have some justification when it comes to how the week end is to be spent, but I realize perfectly well that peace without a declaration is sometimes the wiser course, and I rejoice that we had the opportunity to compare notes a little regardless.

I shall write you in pursuance of your request and the letter will go forward in tomorrow's post. I shall ask him to send the films either to me or directly to you. I am sure he will be delighted to accommodate.

How nice it is to learn that you had an opportunity to sample Eleanor Clark's opus and that you liked it so much. Yes, I thought the chapter on the cats was wonderful, --as entertaining a chapter on such a subject as I ever ran across.

It is so kind of you to pass along particulars about the lady. I had heard nothing about her and so all your information was quite informative. There were three youths from Great Britain here today, --something about some international debating society or some such, and as one of them seemed quite up on his literary department, I spoke of Miss Clark, and he expressed his admiration for the book and told me he thought Miss Clark was an American although he wasn't certain. That was all he knew, and now you have settled that and a hundred other points all in one facile sentence.

You ask about additional particulars about Hadrian's Villa. I think the Villa has been quite thoroughly blue printed.



3882

5987

I don't know if you have access to that listing of  
French books, --the big old two volume set that used to  
grace Foreign Publications. Perhaps the Public Library  
has one such. Anyway, I think the drawings of  
Hadrian's Villa in a folio, then cosizing, --then being  
in the 1930's, about 35 francs, and the thing was listed,  
I believe, under the name of Marjoux. This is only a guess,  
and it may be that in my folio on the Chateau of Marly, which  
was also stirred up by Marjoux, I may find the thing about  
Hadrian's Villa listed. After reading Miss Clark's lovely  
descriptions of the place, I was so eager to see these  
drawings and intended looking in the Marly folio before  
now. I shall cast about a little, see who published the  
Marly thing as sketched by Marjoux and perhaps discover the  
publisher, which might also be helpful. Obviously the  
Villa must have been about the most extensive bit of architecture  
in ancient Rome and it ought to make a re-reading of the  
Clark opus doubly interesting.

And may I thank you for the several literary tid-bits  
you passed along, all of which constituted news for me.  
The Southern writers still seem to get themselves into that  
category and Lion Feuchtwanger promises to come up with  
another historical novel that certainly ought to be  
slapped in the middle of our favorite century. It seems the  
research into Franklin, --"Amm's For America" is going to  
have its counterpart in the French rustic philosopher's biography.  
Let us recommend this most urgently to the Library of Congress  
when the next book list appears. It has been several  
hours since I learned the title. --perhaps it is something  
like "Tis Folly To Be Wise", which, I suppose, was  
inspired by the famous line: "If ignorance is bliss,  
'twere folly to be wise". -- or some such.

I know so little about old Jean Jacques Rousseau that  
anything I read about him will be informative, and although  
I have always been under the impression he did not  
list charm among his various assets, still, the portrait  
may be more satisfying to everybody that Picasso's  
Portrait of Stalin which seems to have kicked up such a  
racket in French Communist circles, and besides, it is  
quite possible that the biographer may succeed in giving  
us as much of a portrait of the 18th century as of  
one of its more notable citizens, so the reading ought to  
be good regardless.

And here we are at the foot of the page already, and how  
pleasant it has been to chat. As your week end, so is our  
today quite summer-ish with the thermometer in the upper  
80's, with me liking it.....

3882

5988

Thursday, March 19th, 1953.

Memorandum: I am so glad you told me about the devote volume of which I had  
not heard. If Messrs. Lewis and Clarke appear in that volume, I  
should like to read it for them as well as other particulars.

As for the sketch of the African House, I'm so glad you like  
it and it is so nice of you to send such warm congratulations. There  
is no rush at all about getting it back to Rock Hall, for all they want  
it for is their files, so don't hurry about sending it to  
la Cowperthwaite.

I'm so glad you told me about St. Paul having metamorphosed  
from Pig's Eye. What a name! The citizen will never live that one down.

The account of your rains and your travels and your impending  
pre-Easter guests makes me exhausted for your sake. Let us hope  
the whole posse doesn't decide to turn to the big city for  
a frolic which would probably be just that for them but not at all  
for little Miss Lee. And while they, --in part or in whole, are about,



5989

2388

please don't try writing but rather conserve any chance extra moment  
for catching your breath.

I had not heard of the two visitations of death on the sarueh  
family and I thank you for advising me. Wouldn't you love to know  
where the sailing name stems from.

Millsbaugh drug telephoned me today asking for some more  
grandpere plates. I reckon there will be some coming along from  
rock hall before very long. It is nice to know they are still  
enjoying a measure of popularity in town.

Last night I stumbled over a Columbia broadcast from  
station W. L. Loyola university of the South, with studios in  
the Roosevelt hotel of New Orleans and was surprised to hear they were  
having a faculty panel, as it is called when several professors  
participate on this or that subject. The subject was none other  
than Madame de Pompadour, with Professor Smythe of the faculty, --  
the author, sitting in, and a guest joining the professors in the  
person of Alice Walworth Graham, Alice, who is 40-ish and of vast  
charm of speech and manner, sounded like a shrew of 70, and  
I still can't understand how the radio could do her so badly, --  
as unlikely an impression as the average camera shot with Mrs.  
Roosevelt. As for the talk, it was about as stupid as anything  
I have heard. First they got off on the question whether Mme. de  
Pompadour was "a malignant political force", followed by the question  
as to whether all women are, and from that point, when I want to  
shout: "How about men being a malignant force in politics", -- some  
mumb-skull observed that Louis XV, "of course" was a much greater  
man than Louis XVI, which certainly showed something or other,  
and then the French Consul General got in his say which was to the  
effect that Mme. de Pompadour, not being a legitimate queen, couldn't  
possibly have been a good force, etc., etc., etc.

The whole business from the sound of Alice's voice to the  
opinion's expressed were equally cockeyed, although I am glad to  
say that Alice, who certainly knows nothing about 18th century  
France and Dr. Smythe, did say that anybody who patronized the  
arts as she did, built alyssees palace, the Ecole Militaire and  
established the manu acturing plan of severs couldn't have  
been wholly without some merit.

I thought you hit the nail slap on the head when you remarked  
how nice it would be if Carolyn only knew how to cooperate the way  
Charles Cunningham does in getting stuff into print. Another  
"misere" about Carolyn is the snapshots of Oakley, taken expressly for  
my befit. I need them so badly, needed them so badly a couple  
of weeks back. But I'll make it without them, and yet how  
much Carolyn looses by her dawdling. But in spite of this  
sour note, how nice it has been conversing together today and  
again I bless you for all the nice things you are forever doing for  
me.

2387

5990

Rienzi - cross Leudivine

Friday, May 20th, 1953

Memorandum:

May I tell you that the copy of Collier's and of  
Illustration came through nicely in today's post and that  
I am delighted to have both.

I am particularly appreciative of your synopsis of the  
illustration article about Louisiana. Nobody else on earth would  
have ever thought of doing such a thing for me, let alone  
taking the trouble to transcribe the gist from one language  
into another. By setting forth the salient points, you have  
provided me with data of value, and on one point mentioned by  
the authro concerning failure to find people who would  
speak French with him, I should like to speak at  
length a little later in this memo.

And it goes without saying I was delighted to see all  
the illustrations in both Colliers and the other French item.  
The appearance of illustration seems to have been amazingly  
changed since last I view it. "Greatly altered" would be  
the way la Marquise de Sevigne might have expressed it. I  
suppose this change may be due to many reasons, including  
paper shortages in Europe, for I notice that not only is  
the general design and layout quite different but that  
a very inexpensive grade of paper is sandwiched in between  
the better grades, giving the strangest sort of  
impression as one turns through the magazine.

And may I congratulate you on your amazing memory  
in recalling that Concord in Natchez had a horseshoe staircase.  
It certainly did and the last I knew the stairs still remained  
although the old mansion itself burned a number of years back.

I believe I recognize the house in the present issue.  
It is Rienzi, deep in the heart of the Cajun country, being  
about a half or perhaps a full mile from the center of  
Thebadoux, -- a town you may recognize even though I have  
forgotten how to spell its name. I think I may have mentioned  
the place before, as I have visited there with the Madam in days go  
bye.



2333

5991

Kienzi was a great sugar plantation. During the lean years of reconstruction, when old Miss Lieudivine was feeling the financial pinch of the times, she did fine needle work for Mrs. Allen, the mistress of Minzie, I think, although the Madam never said so precisely. But she did used to tell me two characteristics of Mrs. Allen which I have probably mentioned before. She was terror stricken by any suggestion of a thunder storm and on afternoons when her carriage was waiting for her at the foot of the horseshoe staircase to take her for a drive in the country, Mrs. Allen, if she caught sight of the smallest sort of a cloud on descending the staircase, would cancel the carriage and turn back into the house. Mrs. Allen always wore gray and her gray crepe de chine gowns and especially the taffeta ones, with which she always wore jet ornaments, were crations of restrained elegance beyond compare. And this is where I suspect Miss Lieudivine came in, -- whenever the seamstress fashioned a new frock for Mrs. Allen, the lady would inquire what the charge for making the dress might be, and in making payment, would invariably express her appreciation for the handwork by giving the seamstress twice the sum asked. Her charity was proverbial in the Kienzi region where she was beloved by everyone and in the 1940's people who had known her were still bemoaning the cruel twist of fate that resulted in Mrs. Allen dying, poverty stricken, while as a char woman, she was scrubbing floors in the New Orleans Charity Hospital. Following the collapse of the sugar market, and Kienzi had gone to the wall, Mrs. Allen had simply withdrawn, no one knew where, --until death claimed her. During those years of poverty, I hope God held back the clouds over the Crescent City every day at the time poor Mr. Allen had to venture out from her attic chamber to get to her work of floor scrubbing at the hospital.

According to the weather man, spring arrived official at 4:10 this afternoon. I didn't feel any particular jolt at the time, as I was bogged down with North Carolina pilgrims. The day has been a busy one, and withal quite pleasant both as to weather and people. Four business men, --R. S. A. and A. R. and R. men were expected for dinner but instead of 4, nine actually arrived to grace the board. They were all quite civilized and it was as pleasant as could be.

I enjoyed hearing the Oscar awards from Hollywood last night but found it odd this movie business should have been sponsored by I.O.O.F. television, as though the Baptists were sponsoring a Catholic sun rise Mass, or some such.....

2333

5992

Sunday, March 22nd, 1953.

Memorandum:

In tomorrow's post, along with this letter, but under separate cover, goes forward a clusy package. I advise you in advance so that on receipt, it may be opened the easier if you have a knife or shears to cut the outer carton. I found one carton that fitta reather snugly into another, and thinking this double wrapping would protect the porcelain contents, I made use of same, although I fear you may find it difficult to open. I have included a couple paper bags in the package, so that you may make use of them, if you please, on opening the package, and casting all the boxes and newspaper stuffing into a trash can that may, I hope, be handy bye.

What with high winds and heavy rains today, I got an opportunity to do two or three things I had hoped to do this week end, including an opportunity to turn thro gh the illustration and the polliers at leisure. And the mention of illustration recalls that in Friday's memo I mentioned I wanted to go a little further into the matter of Louisiana Cajuns and the frequency with which they decline to speak their brand of French with Europeans. This is based in large part, I think, from or on the fact that Europeans, --and for all I know, people from every continent, in laughing at pronunciations different from accustomed speech from whence they hail. A feeling of "shame-face" tends to develop and conversation tends to trickle away or come to a complete halt. I have seen it happen time and again that a Cajun would rather make strenuous efforts to speak in English to a European of Latin origin than employing the language with which they are both basically acquainted.

What is most surprising about this matter is the fact that very often the European is a cultivated person, most considerate of other people's feelings and yet, at the same time, apparently unmindful of the fact that he is causing embarrassment on the part of the Cajun if he laughs at the pronunciation or turn of a phrase in Cajun French that differs from the language of the native Frenchman. I know not if this same thing happens with other nationalities in other sections of America and elsewhere, but



2232

5993

1882, March 23rd, 1953

I have heard it said that Scandinavians living in Wisconsin and Minnesota speak their ancestral tongue as infrequently as possible with travelers from Norway and Sweden, and I have assumed this may be the reason. It seems odd that this lack of imagination should be so widely spread, but it seems to be so.

It is perfectly true that I find many a word or phrase, --as I am forever remarking, to be everything from slightly amusing to hilarious, but as a matter of course, I try never to bat an eyelash before the person or members of that person's same social scale. I suppose all of us sometimes pay too high a price for our merriment but it seems lamentable, indeed, that people unwittingly should so often cut themselves off from pleasant contacts with their fellow man by such a surprising lack of imagination.

Well, so much for that, and I suppose I shall return to the subject again on occasion.

Saturday's weather was perfect and one consequence was the flowering of the lemon tree along the front gallery, --the tree sent by Mr. Tarness a year or so ago. Its perfume is marvelous. And a other consequence of the fine weather was plenty of pilgrims, and a few minutes before supper, the last of them were just leaving, --the President of Centenary College, -- when the winds blew in. The latter, four strong, remained for supper which, surprisingly enough, they ate this time. I think both husband and wife were sober and nothing reached the pitch it inevitably does when either or both are high.

Early Saturday afternoon, Mrs. Coombs and Mrs. Wood came down to visit with madam regard and dropped by to see me for a few minutes and to present me with several copies of the magazine section of the Times which they had badgered out of Charles Cunningham. I had purchased these, thinking people like Miss Nellie, La Storm, etc., would enjoy looking at the pictures, but delivery had never been made and in order to forestall the purchase money being returned, I was glad to employ my agents to secure these copies. I rolled up a flock of these this afternoon and thought of merrily as I glanced at my downy couch and noticed all the outgoing material, especially from the Schroeder department.

Static made today's invitation to Learning difficult to hear, but I did get the announcement that Ellis or McBook and Clifton Radaman are to be guests next Sunday and the sounds wonderful. Must fold now but not my thoughts. ....

2232

5994

Re: Oakley design 5 Bill Stewart

Monday, March 23rd, 1953  
Memorandum:

How nice to find your Wednesday letter in today's post, and may I thank you most heartily for having held my hand which had already penned correspondence which, in view of the Audubon matter you so thoughtfully brought forward, might have caused endless confusion.

I am perfectly convinced that Mary Whitaker misread Fort Union into Mount Vernon. Nobody on earth but you would have caught this error, and again, as so often in the past, I marvel at your diligence, wisdom and kindness.

In going through the Audubon Journal for 1843, it struck me that Audubon had failed to mention the name, Mount Vernon, because he had already jotted it down on his doe head drawing, and like many another diarist, probably tends to skip various points in one or another type of entry if the particular point may have already been dwelt upon in some other communication, --or as in the doe head episode. For if memory serves me correctly, Mount Vernon never appeared in the actual Journal, --I suppose you may be acquainted with that work, --perhaps in two volumes, which, I believe is rather rare, as it probably never went through but a single edition.

Checking on the dates of June 30th - July 3rd, in the Journal, --which, if I recall, represents direct reproduction, including odd spelling in the original manuscript, --no mention was made of either the doe's head or Mount Vernon, but since we thought we had a notation in Audubon's own hand, the assumption was that the master, satisfied that he had covered the point on the drawing, didn't repeat the data in the Journal.

And so we shall drop, --or at least hold in abeyance, the Mount Vernon, Iowa, project, and it seems logical to cast about next to determine in what state Fort Union may now be located, if, indeed, there be any such place today, and if there is not, try to determine if sometime down through the years, the



5995

original name of Fort Union may have been changed to something like Pig's Eye, or some such. It would certainly be remarkable if we should find Fort Union does exist, either under that name, or some later one and that it boasts of some sort of an educational institution.

In the meantime, I shall try checking with Alice or Mary about the Fort Union matter, just to be positive. Neither of them are much at writing letters and I shall have to contact Alice through Roan and Mary through Mrs. S. G. Henry. It's a bore not to be able to write either of them directly.

in the post bringing your letter came a re-done Oakley design that is as charming as the Corpus Christi one was not. It is fascinating to see how Nina, in seeming to carry out in detail my original sketch so utterly unlike anything I intended conveying, and how Mr. Stewart, having only Nina's sketch to go on, succeeded as by telepathy, in bringing back into existence precisely what I had originally envisioned and outlined in my sketched which he never saw. I was able to get the sketch back into the out-going mail this morning, and so the thing will probably go into production forthwith.

I attached a clipping from last Thursday's Watchtowers Times which speaks for itself. It was so kind of you to offer to return some of your copies, but I assure you I have already rounded up as many as I needed.

I reached the bottom of the page last night before mentioning yesterday's young tornado. The unmistakable roar surged up during a heavy rain along about 2 p.m., and although it blew things about a bit on the Cohen plantation between her and Magnolia, it only trimmed a few trees of dead branches at Melrose. We are in a bee line between Leesville and Winfield where in the former place a man was killed and in the latter several houses set off their foundations, so I guess we were lucky in not losing so much as a shingle.

I might add that if you haven't been through too many of this type of atmospheric phenomenon, --heaven knows you have experienced enough, as have all people, of the human variety, one is usually able to detect the approach of the thing in time to be take one's self to a cyclone cellar, if one should chance to possess such a thing. It has been a happy day because of your elegant letter and a busy one because of a dozen undertakings. Now I shall knock off a bit of mail and fold....

5996

Tuesday, March 24th, 1953.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Friday letter in this morning's post. I gathered the papers doddled along the way a bit, and what with the mails running on such a curious schedule at the moment, I take it as a matter of probability that this memo may not reach your true hand much before the natal day anniversary.

I wasn't at all surprised, of course, to hear you say you would gladly return some of the papers, but as outlined in an earlier note, I have been successful in rounding up all I need and so I urge you to cut the two for scrapbooks and retain the other, if you please. I am especially a believer in cutting them for the scrapbook, for often in that form the material seems to be more available at odd points along the way that the uncut issues which so often have a way of getting out of reach, -- what with their cumbersome dimensions and their fragile nature.

Jimmy and ~~the~~ Rosalind came to see me this afternoon. They were quite gay and it was a pleasure to chat with them, although second and third secretaries, arriving during their visit, had to be sent away although I had several items I wanted to run through, as much out of curiosity as anything, --especially one from la Montesperan. I was so glad I had had a brief go at the important letter in today's bath with the first secretary

I offered my guests a "drop" of port but Jimmy is on the wagon, although his failure to make a gesture in the wine glass department did not deter him from gaiety of conversation. He pulled an amusing line when speaking of Frances Parkinson Keyes, when, in response to my inquiry as to which he thought was her most satisfactory book, he blandly said

"I understand Mrs. Keyes thinks that "Dinner at



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"Antoine's" is one of the best books she never wrote."

I rather liked that, as probably would Mr. Deutch who is said to have been the actual author.

I noticed when they left that they were driving a new car and Jimmy said it worked very well and any day I would telephone them I had decided to hurdle the front gate, he would be entranced to drive down and pick me up and whisk me up to their place to spend the day. That was very kind of him, I thought, but I haven't a doubt he must have felt as reasonably sure as did I that I shall not be likely to put through such a call.

I particularly enjoyed Ed. Murrow tonight in his few remarks about Queen Mary. It was from his broadcast I learned of her death, as I had not heard Lowell Thomas. Unquestionably she was a remarkably strong character. He didn't say so, but although he mentioned both points, the two of them seemed wonderfully paradoxical. --the fact that she never would use a telephone but did smoke. It always did seem to me that if she could puff on a cigarette she might have been able to have a got at the telephone, but that is merely one person's opinion.

I let Celeste turn through the copy of illustration today, and as I handed it to her, saying where it came, she said:

"You know mother and I find ourselves talking about her almost every day and we have made up our minds that of all the people we ever knew, she is the most marvelous person."

So there you are, just exactly, --in fact, word for word, as it came to me, and oddly enough, it seemed so natural that I should have instinctively responded:

"This should be the memo reaching your true hand on your anniversary day, may I echo the sentiments expressed above, as you express the fervent wish that it may be a splendid anniversary."

And may I say how happy I am going to be, thinking of little Miss Lee and playing somehow or other that the whole business is sort of a joint jet of happiness....

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5998

Wednesday, March 24th, 1963.

#### Memorandum

surely by the time this note reaches your true hand, the natal day will have dawned and as you read these lines, your day will seem the more fulsome, I hope, because of the realization that thoughts from many another heart-beat will be flowing in your direction.

I like to think of natal days, including Christmas, as being not so much a flash of light, one 365th segment out of the year but rather an anniversary that spreads over a long span of time, with the weeks before the event suggesting its advent like dawn foretells the approach of day, and then, when the calendar day has passed, a lingering sentiment not unlike the afterglow of sunset. That's why I think I like these days so much, for it seems as though the heart bubbles over with joy at the approach, giving the actual anniversary date its due importance but not unmindful before hand that anticipation is petty important, too.

Today's in-coming post brought the films from Rudolph which I shall enclose herewith. When you are finished with them, you may return them to me or to him as seems more convenient to you. I suppose you know his address is

Rudolph Ruchs,  
P. O. Station, Box 5325,  
Denton Texas.

If you are in any way pressed for time when finished with them, and you can save a moment by skipping extra correspondence, there is no need to write him a letter, for when writing him to borrow them, I remarked that "a lady of mutual acquaintance" wanted them for a little while, and he might well suppose the lady to be Celeste, Madam Combs, the lady doctor or heaven knows whom.



5999

The enclosures in this or an accompanying envelope, speak for themselves. The one from Sister holds a kernel of discord, in that she mentions enclosing \$12.00 as against a Christmas delivery, and of course there was no enclosure at all, thereby affording her a splendid opportunity to accuse at least a half dozen people of having robbed her, such as a servant to slipped out the money before the letter was taken to the post office, or the person who did the actual mailing, or some postal employee along the way, or the melrose clerk or the addressee or the latter's secretary, --and a flock of other potentials that you and I could never imagine.

As for the Montepan letter, I was somehow depressed by it, and I can't think why. Perhaps this may stem from the fact that the man in the piece is too good an egg to be scrambled up with such a tart, but, after all, his opinion in that matter should be as good as mine if not better, and if he knows what he wants and is getting it, I can't see why I should be depressed about that.

With two men working in the gardens and three on the river bank, I have been fairly busy all day without needing Ohio pilgrims to fill in the chinks of time. In responding to the supper bell, --I noticed a car at the front gate as I came up from the margin of the river. It was Dr. Rand, bringing me some fine salad and inviting me to accompany him to the camp for supper. I thought he looked exceedingly well. I persuaded him to come and sit with Eugene and me while we ate and to come to Lucca afterwards for a little sitting, but I declined going to the camp as my secretarial situation is in a shambles at the moment and I didn't want to confuse it further by absenting myself. Then, too, I had an appointment with Beau Mack to work on my long tresses and a couple of in-coming telephone calls from Charles Cunningham, etc., to anticipate. There was no particular news for us to exchange but he did ask if an Alexandria teacher of 12 year olds might bring a bus load of them up for a tour. I simulated enchantment over this but secretly bemoaned the mechanics involved at a time when so much other stuff is cooking.

So runs out the day and a magnificent moon tonight mellow the white garden and tends to inspire me toward contemplation rather than correspondence. But I must get at the latter and so will fold for now, --and withal the ha pier because I am tinkering of what day it may be when this note is being read.....

6000

Friday, March 27th, 1953.

Memorandum:

Somebody sent me stamps from Kock Hall as change, and as I thought you might be able to make use of them, I enclose them here with.

This morning about 4, it began thundering mightily and it poured down in buckets until 6. When the sun came out, --and by 9 I had no end of pilgrims who continued in droves until noon, when they all broke off and I never did see another all day. It's odd how they have a way of making it, unbeknown to one another, at approximately at the same time.

The people from Fort Worth we are acquainted with the Campbells and that meant they were pleasant, but I still don't understand last night's request for an 8:45 tour. The other people didn't matter much.

The incoming mail was non-descript but I send it along in part at least, so you may keep abreast of people.

I must say it was good to hear from Helen. I never have been able to persuade those ladies that the week ends are the most difficult times of the year or rather the week, but we shall see what I can do to persuade them to try some other days than Saturday and Sunday. I think Carolyn has rougher days ahead and after she has dawdled about in semi-circles, she is likely to see the bank take over Old Bonita. I'm afraid. If she really had good sense and expected to make a little money on an article, she wouldn't be cooking up a frolic over here for a week end with Helen and Lucille, but would be jumping in her station wagon and heading down this way to snap a couple of pictures and send in the shots, since that is all that is holding the thing up. Personally, it seems nothing could be more futile than conjuring up some such idea as trying a whole Cane River article with her if she can't even get out a melrose one that is already completed.

And may I invite your attention to the odd letter from Daisey in the bell. I found what she had to say about Mosedown fascinating.



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but it did seem more of a short story than a letter.

we certainly know some odd people.

while I think of it, I wanted to say that I am having the Royal rigged up to the point of having a couple of the keys changed so that the board will be standard. As you may have noticed from time to time when lines have over-lapped on letters written on this old Underwood, it is approaching a state of decrepitude that gives it the right to rest a little, and with the Royal equipped with a standard keyboard, this outfit can be set aside as an emergency spare.

I take it La Storm must have experienced a bit of difficulty when lines were written one on top of the other. Be that as it may, she hazarded the thought that something could be done about my outlet to the outside world and as the cost involved in getting the Royal around to standard will be covered from that quarter, the thing ought to be accomplished without much of a jar.

An idea struck me last night relative to a plate, what with the doe's head temporarily on the shelf until we find out, perhaps through Bora, some particulars about Fort Union and what city, if any, may be at that place now. I shall have to give the new idea a little serious consideration before taking the first step. I am wondering if the Masons have ever got out a Masonic plate. If a non-Catholic could rig up a Catholic chapel, why couldn't a non-Mason make a Masonic plate, I asked myself. Naturally the thing would be based on the Lafayette apron. What would get in Melrose, the lovers of Revolutionary and especially Lafayette history, and finally the Masonic order itself. I suppose there must be thousands of Masons in Louisiana but whether they or their wives, as members of the affiliate society, the Eastern Star, would be plate buyers, I wouldn't know. I think the idea worth thinking about, however, and that will be in the Carolyn class of daddling, but still, it would seem to have a seed of something or other in it. I suppose the trick would be to balance the design in such a way that the Masonic and the historic aspects would balance, to get people in and out of each separate category.

So far as the actual date is concerned, the natal day will have been celebrated before this memo reaches your true hand. But the happiness welling up in various quarters will be pulsating still when your eyes run through these lines. It's so nice to think of natal days as being of a particular season, unlimited by an arbitrary page or number on the calendar.....

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6002

Sunday, March 29th, 1953.

Memorandum:

Louisiana, Massachusetts, Texas, Minnesota, Florida, Oklahoma and California. So came pilgrims, making

a busy week end, but withal a pleasant one. I reckon next week end will be heavier, what with more people in the road making the most of the Easter weekend. As I rec'd 11, Louisiana always goes in for a Thursday night to Monday morning week end, so far as State offices, schools and the like are concerned, and that fact, I suppose will start things going a day earlier as week ends are measured.

In town a movie has been showing for the past couple of days, --The President's Lady, which seems to have Andrew and Rachel Jackson as its central characters. Two members of the family consulted me on various historical points touched on in the picture. One of these was about Charles Dickinson, the question being how he was allied to the Erwins. None of them ever seem to be able to remember the name of Isaac Erwin, their great grandfather, and that it was Isaac's sister who was married to Charles Dickinson.

It seems a little odd, too, that they can never remember the name of their grandfather on their mother's side. One day last week, an insurance company telephoned me in town, asking him for the dates of his mother's birth and death, plus the names of her mother and her father. He couldn't answer those difficult questions and referred them to J. M. Henry who telephoned me from the store, asking me if I had any family papers that would reveal this information. I told him I could rattle it off to him without consulting the records but he ducked, asking me if I would talk with the insurance company regarding the matter as they might have other questions he wouldn't be able to answer. Oddly enough, J. M. Henry never can remember



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his grandfather's name, which seems to me should be  
easy enough since he knows perfectly well that his  
eldest brother was named Stephen Garrett Henry after the  
Madam's father, but somehow that all seems too much for them.

They say the picture is quite entertaining but I gather  
the makers have taken some poetical license. They  
mentioned big cotton boats on the Mississippi. If these  
appear in connection with Rachel's initial visit to Natchez  
they are anachronisms, of course, since there wasn't enough  
cotton in the region in the 1790's to shake a stick at.  
I think there is a scene, too, in which Rachel is snubbed  
by the ladies of Natchez on grounds that she was a bigamist.  
This is especially funny as being pinned on to Natchez ladies  
who certainly never snubbed Rachel and, I am sure, never  
snubbed anybody before or since on such grounds, for as  
everybody knows, Natchez from its inception had such a  
curious assortment of moral standards that mere bigamy  
wouldn't ripple the smoothest surface and so far as snubbing  
the wife of the hero of New Orleans, that it just  
too much for Natchez ladies have always snatched at any  
excuse for a frolic, and certainly nobody in Adams County  
ever cared what had gone before, just so long as there  
was an excuse presented for a social fling.

I was glad to be able to hear most of today's  
invitation to learning, even though the subject matter seemed  
of little interest. I could listen to Messrs Bryson,  
Cook and Radiman all day, regardless of what they might  
be talking about and whether I had any notion as to  
what their conversation was all about. For somehow they  
approach as artists that status of a marvelous opera star  
or a talking book recorder, --the actual words seem so  
secondary as to the manner in which they are presented.  
That old saw about F. D. K. being able to sell old maids  
baby carriages and make them believe they needed them seems  
to apply in this instance also, although it did seem a pity  
that the subject under discussion wasn't something a  
bit more within the reach of a wider circle of people.

The Louisiana iris are being (beginning) to come into  
flower and as we are a week or two behind the Lafayette season,  
I assume the annual gathering of enthusiasts are  
or is congealing down in the bog country right now.  
It seems to me, and mentioned this fact and that  
they were going to be down there this week end, but I  
have forgotten, I was so tired when he passed this way.  
If that be true, I reckon a flock of Willia Riccels will  
be passing this tomorrow on their way home. I hope it  
has been spring like in your neighborhood this week end and  
you have had a chance to sniff the big open spaces a bit....

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6004

Monday March 30th, 1953.

Memorandum: It was such a lovely, rosey dawn, just the kind of  
day it should be for little Miss Lee. For after all,  
this is her week, and for a little while I was content just  
to gaze from my downy couch in the direction of  
the bamboo and the North and East sky beyond and run  
over my hopes for a happy day in Manhattan and count my  
blessings and all it means that today was today and little  
Miss Lee was just that and nothing finer in the whole  
wide worldegan the day.... but when 9:00 clock had  
arrived and the postman had handed me my mail, I had  
realized I had been mistaken and that in reality it wasn't  
Miss Lee's birthday but my own, --how magical her wand is.  
Your lovely card sits here before me, the birds of  
about the bird bath flitting gaily at each tap of the keys,  
and I love everything about it, --front page to back, --outside  
and in.  
Before the night gets much further advanced, I am hoping  
that my expert ribbon changer may see my light shining  
through the bamboo and come to make the most of the gift  
in duplicate which the envelope contained. I suppose  
I shall wear out at least one of these before the Royal  
gets rigged up and it will be so nice having a fresh ribbon  
when I alternate this machine with the other.  
I have paused for a conference with the expert to  
enjoy a cool, --thanks to the Easter Bunny and not the penguin  
for same, and to be advised that this typing is fairly  
clear as yet. My slender candle had been seen shining  
through the bamboo and the expert was glad to lend  
advice on deferring a change of ribbon until later  
in the week, --and to enjoy a nice fresh cigarette, and  
I am glad for all the circumstances that occasioned the  
pause and permitted my first sample of that particular  
segment of my birthday box.  
I need scarcely tell you how entranced I am with the  
... ..



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6005

Toffy and most especially the container in which they arrived. What a lovely receptacle, and how it seems to slide back the years to another Coronation that never was effected. Sometimes the days of Edward VIII seem quite a ways back before the 2nd World War and then, as with the receipt of your lovely gift today, carrying the likenesses of another Duke and a new Sovereign, it seems but yesterday that Edward was to the fore. Oddly enough, and this is an excellent example of the tricks time plays with one's memory, --or is it one's memory playing tricks with time, --the coronation of George VI seems something far more ancient as a place on the calendar than the festivities prepared for the King who preceded him.

All in all, what was supposed to have been somebody else's birthday turned out to be mine, and what a happy one it has been for me, --thanks exclusively to you.

Helen's been ailing for the past week, put in her somewhat frail appearance late this afternoon. She is on the mend and I am glad, for there were several things in the hand written section requiring her attention.

I learned something from her that mildly surprised me and which somehow again gave Cane River a stamp of difference, not likely to be encountered elsewhere in the world. For Helen spoke of the practicing going on at school today on the part of those playing in the orchestra. Most of them are about Helen's age, --probably in the 6th or 7th grade. It seems the band has developed sufficiently far to hit out at wing stuff and on Saturday night, tucked in between Good Friday and Easter Sunday, the grade school orchestra, --or as they are pleased to style it, the band, has been engaged to supply the music for a gigantic swing out at the local saloon and honkey-tonk. Where else in the world, I find myself wondering, would an educational institution countenance such tender members of the school providing music in a honkey-tonk where, and especially on Saturday nights, most of the customers are in varying stages of art ficial gaiety, inebriated by whiskey and wine, and flying beer bottles and flashing knives are accepted as matters of course.

And seemingly as though we had just started our little chat, here it is time for me to stop. It has been such a happy day at this bend of the river, thanks to you, and may it have been an equally happy one along North River, thanks also to the circumstances of little Miss Lee's natal day....

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6006

Tuesday, March 31st, 1953.

Memorandum: I noted that you had to say about the moment of the moment. Another birthday dawn and another birthday post, bringing your two letters of the 25th and the 27th, for which I thank you most heartily.

I haven't taken up the clippings which I look forward to examining with care on the morrow or Thursday, but I have taken care to examine the map you so thoughtfully sketched and am as indebted to you for having contrived it for me as I am enchanted with the opportunity to find out about the situation around which the Mount Vernon--Fort Union matter revolves. I was especially impressed by the "Roosevelt Country" wondering if this refers to R. R. and the place where he was want to go on hunting expeditions. I have somewhere read in some detail of his exploits with his rifle in Colorado during his residency but I suppose the Montana region may have been the scene of earlier exploits. But be that as it may, it is obvious that Fort Union is quite a ways from Mount Vernon, Iowa, and I shall let the doc's head rest a while until we see what next will turn up in matters relating to the famous John James.

The papers you returned arrived today, too. I am leaving them wrapped up as they are, awaiting your permission to return them; for I should love to send them back if you should care to incorporate them or any part of them in the scrapbook section. I didn't know but you might have a Cane River or Melrose scrapbook which might be the logical place to put some of the material, and if so, I shall be so glad to have you do so, if you care to, since I feel your scrapbooks will be of so much interest in days to come. I don't want to send things along if to you are momentarily in the midst of too much whoop-ia to bother with such material, but if you think you might care to make use of the data at some later time, I shall be glad to see it to when and how you wish. I shall be glad to see it to when and how you wish.



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forward your copies any time you may designate.

All my birthday treasures of yesterday continue surrounding me, save some of the tiffy which is inside me. The lovely card continues to grace my desk here before me, the tools convenient to hand, the typewriter ribbons ready for replacing the present one and the coronation box adding a note of colorful gaiety and a heap of souvenirs that make it ever so precious to me. It is such a happy birthday, --thanks to you.

I noted what you had to say about the circus obtaining at the moment. Let us hope that doesn't keep on going all the way between now and the end of time.

A couple of hundred azelias were purchased for the camp below Monette's Ferry today, --the camp, by the way, is referred to by some people as "The Bourbon Club" for reasons not difficult to guess. The trucks brought the azelias here before heading down the road and what with it being birthday time and all, I thought it would be nice for "us-es" to have a few. I bought a dozen and got them set out before noon. After a raft of field hands from here had gone down to plant at the club, J. A. decided, along about noon, that it might be nice to plant periwinkle and iris down there, too. He asked me if I could get him some. I procured a truck load of periwinkle and quite a dab of German iris, but when he asked me "if I cared about running down to supervise", I declined, for I had an appointment and my day was bound to be full-full without a moment's pause as between 5 a.m. and first dark. I do not propose to get tangled up with that outfit which includes the gentry as exemplified by "Cousin Arthur", Dan and a flock of other people of no interest to me.

Ora brought the assistant Librarian of Northwestern this afternoon, along with his wife and child. Merr Neames had been in Baton Rouge and brought a bottle of Sauterne to me on behalf of Dr. Guy Lyle, Librarian of A. S. U. as a gesture following his visit here a couple of weeks back. The Neames child made such a racket, the pilgrimage wasn't of much account. About the only news I learned wasn't of much interest. -- to wit, the radio out of Alexandria was talking about Logan get "set" to receive the Alexandria Garden Club on Wednesday.

Perhaps I didn't listen to the right stations today but what impressed me most in the news was the employment of but a single line, announcing the funeral of Queen Mary. I should have enjoyed more details and an account of those present. But on her birthday has been the news of the week regardless and I hope yours is being as happy as mine....

6008

6008

Wednesday, April 1st, 1953.

Memorandum:

The month changes from March to April but the lovely birthday days continue, regardless of the calendar.

There aren't so many flowers at the moment, save for the native iris, some of the flowering shrubs and early canas, but the tender new greenery is so delicate and lush that flowers seem almost extraneous.

I am becoming quite infatuated with Melviny and Abel (pronounced A. Bell) --Juanita's 6 year old daughter and 4 year old son. They continue jumping around like grasshoppers and love to help at gardening, which is another way of saying they love to borrow my clippers and take a pass at anything growing. But they are sweet children and if I slow up by a third in passing out my clippers, I discount the loss of time as rest gained, and besides it's fun listening to the children's chatter.

I must learn the names of two lovely people passing this way from Minneapolis today, --a man and his wife with a son getting his Ph. D. from Yale in Anthropology this year. They had passed by Oakley and Mrs. Stirling had set them here and I liked them.

The Garden Club ladies from Alexandria were pleasant, too, and were on the "young matron" side. But they committed one unforgivable social error. They were scheduled to arrive at 1:30 and they blew in precisely at 12:20, -- which is really something different. But without probably knowing it, they had a chance to pay the price for entangling the docket and I made them wait a full half hour to begin with, not out of cussedness but because I had other appointments. They were making a picnic out of their frolic and why they didn't stop at some pleasant and rural bend of the river instead of coming here to dine in their parked cars, I cannot imagine, except on the assumption that they had no imagination. After all, the wife of a banker is inclined to be like a banker herself. I have noticed on occasion, --undoubtedly smart but dumb to a degree on grounds outside the narrow limits of banking. On leaving they expressed the thought that they



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had had a wonderful time and I smiled inwardly as I contemplate how much better it might have been, had the merely followed established custom of keeping an appointment not an hour ahead of time.

The enclosure from Daisy in the Bell is interesting as a description of the Chander gardens and I am enchanted to have her expressions. But it does seem a little odd how her last two letters have been devoted in such major portions to accounts of a single place visited within the last year.

A letter which I may or may not enclose, since I haven't read the post script as yet, comes from Carolyn. I think I shall write her suggesting that she plan to come to Melrose either before or after Helen passes this way, so far as attempting any photographic work. After all, she ought to have learned by this late date that week ends are no time to visit Melrose for work and coming by herself is likely to hold working possibilities that can never be realized when Helen and friends from Waco are also in the neighborhood.

And besides there is my complete indifference to the Kane river article, for knowing Carolyn as we do, we realize that her preparations are magnificent and performances nebular, and in this season of heavy undertakings in gardening and pilgrimage, I feel no particular inclination to spend much time sitting on eggs that aren't likely to hatch within several years. I like the friendship but I prefer taking it less on a working basis than on outright pleasure. If she would like to come when Helen does, that will be fine, but if she comes for work, I prefer to have it for work and not any social mixture.

I know not if we might consider as a good sign and gentle omen that two people, - one from Iowa, the other from Minnesota, -- have already asked that Audubon-Oakley plates be sent them as soon as available. As neither person as seen the design, it would appear they probably are Audubon enthusiasts. How wonderful it would be if, say, 5 or 10 per cent of the members of the Audubon Society's 50,000 members would feel equally moved. --and so another chat of birthday week terminates, and I hope it is being a nice week for little Miss Lee....

1103

6010

Thursday, April 2nd, 1953.

memorandum:  
another lovely, birthday type of day. I hope it was in your neighborhood, too.

The mail begins to show signs of Easter and one or two lovely cards came to hand from people I know not. One, for example, seems to be from some such address as 26th Street, Fort Worth and is signed with initials which nobody seems able to make out. I know no one in Fort Worth living on a street bearing a number for a name. Some reference is made to somebody having a hard time but finding the season the happier because of the memory of being "in your country" last year at this time. Strange business but I suppose the sender labors under the illusion that nobody has been here since so that I couldn't possibly guess the identity of the signer of the initials, even though they can't be read.

I had an appointment for 30 people at 9:30 this morning but as they had not appeared by 10 o'clock when Dr. and Mrs. Knipmeyer arrived, I advised the store that the balance of my morning was busy and that if pilgrims arrived, they should be advised that they should telephone me next week to see if an appointment could be arranged to mutual convenience. I doubt if it will. After yesterday's tomfoolery with the Garden Club, I am in no mood to trifle with people who can't keep their appointments. I might add, too, that while it is unpleasant to be kept waiting for people behind in their dates, it is perhaps even more disconcerting to have them an hour and ten minutes ahead of schedule. One nice thing about all this, however, is the fact that it is not I who am asking the favor and so the dilatory pilgrims can be on time or not as they please, for in the immediate future, at least, I expect to see people on schedule or not see them at all. The odd thing about it, this sounds as though I were feeling mighty grumpy whereas I don't seem much concerned about the matter.



0103

6011

I heard one thing today I never expected to hear: --  
Father Becker has been evicted from his Church at  
Cloutierville. I think I have mentioned before that on  
several occasions in the past, the Bishop has  
appointed him to some other post but he has refused to leave.  
Bishop Greco of Alexandria, --comparatively new, thundered  
forth a decree, however, and it seemed as though it  
might be more effective. Father Becker, however, countered  
with a blast against the Bishop, threatening to go direct  
to the Papal Nuncio in Washington to get the Bishop's  
horn toned down a bit. But the Bishop remained  
adamant and Herr Becker thereupon betook himself to  
Washington to see if his power, so arbitrarily and successfully  
employed during the past 34 years, would still hold.  
Well, it didn't. And so this outrageous prelate  
folded up his traps, --a wide flung assortment, and  
it is said, saw to it that plenty of inconvenience  
was caused to Church property before he pulled out, --  
the cutting of plumbing systems in the Rectory,  
Convent, etc., up-setting of electric connections, etc.,  
and generally putting things as much out of order as  
possible. Then, in defiance of the Bishop to  
accept the new post assigned to him, he betook himself  
and his sister to Plaquemine where he had already  
built himself a fine house some years back in preparation  
for just such an eventuality, and of course with all the  
money he has accumulated during his long tenure at  
Cloutierville, -- including the Bachelier estate, he  
will be able to live in fine style and keep on thumbing  
his nose at Church authorities. By the Law of Averages,  
there probably is chicnery in all organizations, cleric and  
lay, but Father Becker was the greatest malefactor wearing  
the robe that I ever knew.

I saw Frances Henry today. She said she had seen the  
Sisters Dormon and the Bands last Sunday, either at  
Arcadia or Cadia, --the former, I suppose since it is  
in North Louisiana where the Dormons once lived. I  
am always confusing those to places as I do Houma and Homer  
for people are inclined to pronounce each name in the  
respective sets as almost alike. Tomorrow the big  
week end rush will be on, I suppose, and I hope it may be a fairly  
long holiday for New York as well as Louisiana residents....

8103

6012

Friday, April 3rd, 1953.

Memorandum:

Another lovely day of pure birthday type and may it be  
be the same in your neighborhood.

What with most things in Louisiana one wheels since  
yesterday noon when most public institutions began the week end,  
it seems beyond belief that so far as I know, not a pilgrim  
turned up at this end of the river today. Isn't that just  
like unpredictable pilgrims. Of course I shall pay for the  
interlude on Saturday and Sunday and Monday but I am  
thankful for today's respite which gave me an opportunity to  
do a lot of delving in the ground and general gardening without  
interruptions. Henrys arrived before five and as we dine at 5:30  
these days, they were here in ample time for the evening  
meal. Joe and Juanita are always so gay, it is a great pleasure  
to see them. I know not if they will stay until Sunday as  
as they had planned, however, as the abundance of dust and  
and pollen particularly starts Joe's hay fever going before  
he arrives and it never seems to decrease while he remains  
in a place where there apparently are plenty of flowers, --  
even though by comparison with some weeks, their number seems  
comparatively small at the moment.

"Blood follows the plough" according to a superstition  
still prevalent in this area, especially among the mulattoes,  
and so this Good Friday saw the usual number of lighter hued  
residents vacationing although many of the negroes were  
going full tilt on their tractors. Now this old adage  
got cooked up to begin with, nobody around here knows. Non-  
catholics say it was something stirred up by the Church  
to make it easier to fill up St. Augustin's on Good Friday  
Friday, but for all I know, the idea may prevail in  
other sections than cane river. Be that as it may, the non-  
catholic negroes who chance to feel the call of Spring fever,  
make the most of the "Blood and plough" thing to use as an



6013

6013

excuse for going fishing and by sun up many a Little River resident had appeared on my gallery, asking if they might get themselves fishing poles from the bamboo hedge. The more enterprising members of the family used to turn a penny by selling them for a dime a piece at the store, but I never thought much of that method of getting rich since it was usually white people from afar who bought the poles and the negroes when nobody was looking would raid the hedges which tended to develop vast spaces of thinness as Good Friday approached. My method of giving them all they want if they will only ask me to point out the cutting places seems to maintain solidity of hedge and provide ample instruments for the Isaac Walton enthusiasts.

The Millsbaugh Drug Com any telephoned today, asking when they might expect the Matchitoches plate. They reported the African House as enjoying popularity and said they would probably have to have a few more plates before long. I shall send them when the Matchitoches number comes to hand.

Instead of doing the Joe's Head next, I think I may round out the first half dozen designs in the Cane River series by doing on or some place along the Joyous Coast, -- probably the Alphonse Frudhomme (Uncle Phanoir) home of Oakland. I should like to do one capturing a slice of the manuscript of "The Journal of the young man of fashion but that might be too much like a blown up section of the Cane River country one, and so I think I shall see what I can think up a out making Oakland stand for the entire Joyous Coast. The lady of Beaufort will be disappointed that her place doesn't figure in the thing, perhaps, but it seems to me Oakland lends itself much better for the purposes at hand. There is the drawback that the Frudhommes haven't any money but the Cloutiers have an abundance. But the Cane River series was never intended as a money maker and in the long run we shall all be the happier that the salient historical features were caught and preserved. I may not do anything about the Joyous Coast before autumn and when I do, I think I shall get Mr. Stewart to try his hand at bringing my ideas into focus for I must say I think his efforts with the African House and Oakley are very nice.

So draws the birthday week to a close. It has been such a pleasant week, and particularly all around one's heart. I fear it has been a hurly-burly for you, what with all the people and circumstances, but I am hoping there have been a couple of quiet little moments when the real things could emerge and happiness radiate your natal anniversary.....

6014

6014

Canada with

Easter Sunday, April 5th, 1953.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Wednesday air mail in Saturday's post.

It goes without saying that I am delighted to know that birthday times, starting on Sunday and carrying on through held so many moments of pleasure for you.

I ponder on the hurly-burly in which you have been revolving and am hoping that with today's termination of the scholastic vacation, a semblance of normalcy may have returned and that eventually you may be settling back into regular routine once more and at long last. I hope I need not urge you, however, that I asked you not to try writing until things are back in place once again.

On the home front, the whole of Saturday was perfect. It is true there were a few pilgrims but they were nice pilgrims and people interested in anything have a way of fitting in nicely to a Melrose tour. My reading machine played out and as Celeste had invited Mrs. Coombs to come to a little party she was giving, the machine went back to town and I shall have it again within a few days.

James Aswell appeared on my gallery about 4, bringing with him Mr. and Mrs. Carl Little of the Houston Press. The Littles were as physically diminutive as their name implied. They spoke very little, too, but it was obvious the Melrose layout meant much to them. In short, the Littles were absorbing the place and it is always pleasant to witness such a rare phenomenon. As they were leaving, J. A. saw them and took them to Celeste's party, -- a more or less plantation thing, -- what with the Joe Henrys of Comroe, Texas and the Dr. Ambrose Hertzogs of New Orleans being among those present. Mr. Little confided later to Celeste that while all his life he had been engaged in the newspaper scramble, he had forever dreamed that some place on earth must suggest the peace and beauty that comes with the mellowness of the years and that in spite of his travels about the Gulf region, he had looked in vain, still believing but



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never finding it until he had explored Melrose. They asked if they might one day come back.

And marvelous to relate, Sunday was almost as peaceful and unencumbered as Saturday. I have no idea where all the pilgrims could have gone. It is true I had some before dinner,-- Dallas people, but after that there was an interlude and only Fort Worth came to represent Texas and Ardmore to stand for Oklahoma. But both States had sent nice people and so everything was pleasant, even in spite of a couple little showers and a sharp but brief hail storm which made the laws look like dotted Swiss where only a few sprigs of grass emerged from the sudden ice covering, the pellets being about the size of marbles. Of course it melted within a few moments but it made the trees in all their greenery look odd above the white covering of the ground.

Blythe and Dr. Rand came around 5, saying they were expecting people at the camp for supper and inviting me over. But Mr. and Mrs. Usach came,--she was Julia Chopin of Perry plantation and cousin of the Hertzsogs and Dr. U. is some sort of a scientist at the college. They brought Dr. Brown of L. S. U. with them, and while the six of us chatted, more people came and the hands departed, as did the Usachs shortly afterward. An hour later, Dr. Rand, Gordon Randolph and Luther Harrison, the latter's brother-in-law, arrived, bringing me what I gather to be a fine supper which Blythe sent, knowing I wouldn't make it to the camp. It is now 11:15 and since supper is quite a ways behind me, I reckon I shall sample some of the food before I fold up my beard.

I learned today that a state or interstate meeting of eminent scientists are having a three day pow-wow at the college in town this week end. They do say that S. G. Henry although not strictly a scientist but nevertheless a sociated in some way with the business, is to be guest speaker. That will put the S. G. Henrys here on Friday, Saturday and Sunday and Celeste and Madam Regard will be in South Louisiana, Celeste being bent on going to the St. Francisville pilgrimage think.

The Louisiana Native Iris Society meets in Lafayette this week end, too, and that means I shall have a flock of Lillian irises,-- either coming or going, or both.

And so, if I got a break on this holiday week end, it looks as though I shall probably not get one next week end, but today's respite gave me a breathing spell and I shall be all "sot" when next Friday rolls 'round. May you be able to discover as much good luck for your own good self,-- and so I fold.....

6016

4103

*Handwritten:*  
Available for  
trade-in for  
plants \$1.00 from  
the colored woman

Monday, April 6th, 1953.  
Memorandum:  
I have taken the liberty to write Rock Hall in the manner revealed in the attached carbon copy. I trust as you don't mind. I thought direct mailing to you might be a considerable time saver.

The letter from Mrs. Stirling reveals some alteration of the situation in the Oakley set-up, so far as the plates are concerned. But this is of scant concern, for while we may not attain any volume if, as appears, she will not dispose over the entire set up at Oakley, still she will dispose of sufficient in her own shop to defray costs of the investment and this segment plus what I shall be able to dispose of in this area will leave whatever is sold at Oakley as gravy. It goes without saying, however, that I shall not venture extensive stock orders without some guarantees to quantity sales at Oakley itself.

I think you will be amused at this tale. Yesterday Julie Chopin Usach cast eyes of yearning on the Orinoco and then bananas and said she would give almost anything to have a root. She had been telling me how she had been embarrassed by the presence in her home of a portrait of a colored woman,-- a mulatto. The Duggingtons of Watchtiches,--college people, had purchased a home which was being occupied by a descendant of Grandpere. The new owners forced the woman to move rather more speedily than she could do conveniently and because of some favor granted by the Usachs and because the woman cared nothing about the portrait, she let them have it for a dollar. But after the Usachs obtained it they felt so shamed faced for fear somebody would think it one of their ancestors that they placed it out of easy view in their kitchen. Somewhat hesitantly, Julie asked me if I would consider exchanging an Orinoco root for the portrait since there seemed to be several people of color gracing the walls at Rucca. I feigned indifference but agreed that I would take a chance on weathering the implications of color and that I would gladly exchange the desired banana root and would throw in some butterfly lily roots to boot. Julie was entranced and apparently vastly relieved at the prospect of



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riding herself of the portrait. Heaven alone knows what the thing will turn out to be. I shouldn't be surprised if it turned out to be a gay '90 chromo but there is a pretty good chance it might be a pastel or an oil and as I can readily establish the recent ownership and through said 1 dy of color learn the identity of the portrait, I think the investment involved is well worth the venture, since Orinocos and butterfly lilies represent a commodity in which rucca abounds. Julie telephoned today to say she would be down Thursday afternoon and we shall see what she brings forth as her share of the barter.

The weather remains cool and partly cloudy, following yesterday's hail storm but the absence of sun gave the seeds and green things an maximum opportunity to absorb the moisture before tomorrow sun will probably begin evaporating whatever remains. I was mildly surprised today when I discovered that the azellias planted last week, which I had assumed had already blossomed this spring, suddenly unfolded lovely sprays of purple and of white festoons. Perhaps they were just naturally behind time or possibly the transplanting and extra attention they received induced them to try all over again. Be that as it may, they are blooming gaily and this afternoon I noticed a couple of humming birds making the most of their treasures of honey.

I intended asking on Friday night if you chanced to hear the Ed. Murrow broadcast wherein he stated the Secretary of State would be quoted by recording from an afternoon interview and the voice that came on was that of a correspondent speaking from Korea on some totally unrelated subject, following which Mr. Murrow continued with his news and on reaching the Korean situation, gave a recording from that quarter which turned out to be the same dish served up three minutes before and attributed to the Secretary. After the recording, Mr. Murrow remarked that if his listeners were a bit confused, so, too, was he, -- and somebody had obviously pushed the wrong button.

The whole thing was of no importance but somehow we have so long taken perfection in Murrow broadcasts as a matter of course that this unprecedented slip-up was astonishing and slightly on the humorous side. I suppose it wasn't precisely that, however, for the pusher of the wrong button.

The enclosed clipping is of no interest but I send it along for the scrapbook. It apparently was written by Mrs. Holloman or by someone having one of her earlier articles to hand. It's cool tonight, -- a good night to sleep, but I had better not think about that until I have attacked the mail.....

6018

6018

Tuesday, April 7th, 1953.

Memorandum: I am sorry I forgot to enclose the carbon copy of the letter to Rock Hall in yesterday's post. Perhaps I shall remember to do so today. It isn't important, but it is much sheer courtesy to keep you acquainted with this aspect of the business.

The weather continues cloudy and mild, with green things growing along at a pretty pace.

Four or five sets of pilgrims passed this way in the afternoon, knocking out much opportunity to do any work at this bend of the river but as I had spent some morning hours up the road to some advantage, I didn't care about the balance of the day and I didn't give any thought to what, -- if anything, -- the four or five gentlemen of color, supposedly assisting in the Melrose gardens did any work, and they didn't do much.

It is token labor at best, and excuse for paying the men something to keep their families going until hoeing time arrives when I shall have nobody at all.

At supper J. A. said he thought the gardens never looked so well and I must say the mild winter has produced an abundance of various shadings of tender green that is a delight to behold. There were a couple of New Orleans pilgrims this afternoon who were a joy to share Melrose with, in that they came prepared to absorb everything. Oddly enough they had bought, -- each of them, -- a set of cane river plates inatchitoches before venturing out this way, not being certain they would even get inside the front gate. With such interest on their part it is easy enough for us to imagine that they were quite prepared to absorb with enthusiasm everything they could learn about the place.

Both they and I, as the tour approached its conclusion,



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got a laugh out of something said by another pilgrim whom we encountered. There were three ladies from Washington apparently afraid to see the place, as explained at the store on requesting permission to visit the place. A servant brought me news of their arrival, and I sent back word I would join them in a few minutes in the garden. As I walked with the new Orleans pilgrims toward the gate, I met the three Washington numbers, going at fair speed, and approaching us from a side direction. I greeted them and asked if I might show them about but they hurriedly declared that they had already made a tour of the place and had seen everything there was to see. As they hadn't been inside a single house and knew nothing about the history of the place, it struck the new Orleans ladies as the height of stupidity, the more so, I suppose, in view of the new Orleans enthusiasm, -- impressive before coming, but trebled during their tour. But I considered myself lucky to be relieved of having to spend time with such scatter brains. Still, I am forever wondering why it is that people of that indifference to such things should wear hemlockes out going to the trouble of searching out such a place to visit. They could employ their energies to such far greater advantage at the bridge tale of chattering over a coke at a drug store counter mail continues non-descript and running several days late, with Easter cards arriving today in some force, and some mail stamped "Mail sack inadvertently delivered at Melville, Louisiana".

The ladies are making preparations to head south on Friday morning bright and early, with Madam Regard remaining at Masura while Celeste picks up guests to take them to the St. Francisville tour on Saturday. If Mrs. S. G. Henry accompanies the General up here for the weekend, the absence of the ladies across the fence will leave that lady pretty much in my lap, -- a possibility I survey with luke warm enthusiasm since her attributes, except for the rougher edges polished off, suggest the worst feline instincts so obvious in Sister. But perhaps Sister herself will show up, and the ought to be just fine, since each can devour the other. It is the General's wife who is forever saying: "If you want to put \$25,000.00 into Melrose and make it a show place, that would be alright but if not, then it ought to be completely closed. I'm so ashamed to let my friends know we are in any way connected with a place that isn't perfectly maintained". Imagine entertaining that type of mentality for a week end.....

1503

6020

Wednesday, April 8th, 1953.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your grand letter of Saturday, -- Good Saturday, -- in today's post.

It goes without saying that I am so sorry your natal day had to be encumbered by a cold. Thank heavens you got good results in demonstrating your good sense by remaining at home on Monday, and by now, I assume, there are no extra personalities in the home to complicate your busy routine.

I loved what you had to say about getting a permanent, and for your sake, I'm glad you don't have to go through a other one of those things for a while. Never having had one, I haven't the vaguest notion as to what all may be involved, but I judge as best I can by imagining myself back in the old days when going to a barber was something I resented enormously, and for the life of me, I can't think why I disliked such a simple thing, -- and the more so, when so many people seem to enjoy it. I could fiddle around wasting more time doing nothing at home and not regret a moment thus spent, but to spend 20 minutes in a barber shop always weighed on me as though each trip was the squandering of a life time.

But when I started having my locks shorn on my own gallery where I could observe the flora as the barber labored and where he latter could point out passing humming birds or tell me of voodoo practices and negro family customs, I really look forward to the undertaking with as much enthusiasm as formerly I disliked the mere thought of it. And before I forget it, I must mention something that I have opened today, relative to our little feathered friends, which I know you will love.

Celeste wanted to borrow Andy to garden for her today, as she will be away over the week end, and so Y. C. was sent in Andy's place. I suppose Y. C. is about 16 or 17, is taller than I and quite capable of defending himself against anything from a bee to a bear, but while he adores driving a tractor, he leath's fooling around in a garden and never accomplishes anything. And so I just vaguely suggest some unimportant task and turn him loose, knowing that nothing will be accomplished anyway.



0300

6021

And so this morning, knowing that Olite would be mowing the lawn of the White Garden, I turned Y. C. loose on the Beauty bushes, all a-drip with honeysuckle just coming into flower, and told him frankly I knew he wasn't going to get far and that I didn't care and that I was putting him into the White Garden because he would probably have more fun killing time with Olite than if he were off in some garden by himself. An hour later, he sought me out. He had cut some of the honeysuckle but hadn't dared to pull it off the Beauty bushes "because those stinging birds are all around", and Olite say they sure will sting you bad if you get tangled up with them". I went to see about the stinging birds and discovered, of course, that he was referring to humming birds. Olite, son of the Axe, cut off his power mower and came, somewhat guardedly and standing well back, to see what might happen, advising me the same way as he had forewarned Y. C. And so I went over to St. Giffin and brought back one of your bottles of honey. I had to hold it why a honeysuckle but a few minutes before three of the humming birds were hovering about, two standing by while the third was having a go at the nectar from the bottle. I was holding in my hand. Both youths were flabbergasted and during the afternoon I learned from another source that the subject for discussion on the store gallery this noon, waiting for the bell to tap, was the unheard of prowess demonstrated in the White Garden during the morning.

It's so nice to know you liked the so called Cane River item which traveled all the way "around Robin Hood's barn" via Rome and Melrose thrown in. And I think it was so very nice that things turned at the office respecting the natal day.

I was a little confused today when a letter from Mrs. Stirling suggested I send five dozen Audubon-Oakley plates, billing the Park Commission and one dozen to her for her shop. In response to her Monday letter, I air mailed Rock Hall to cancel Oakley shipment, sending same to me when Town of Watchitoches plates are ready. I shall hold Mrs. Stirling's letter for a day or so, figuring out what next to do, and what, if anything, I shall advise Rock Hall, who will be quite right in assuming I have completely lost my mind. and being quite justified in that assumption.

Locally the weather continues mild and a bit warmer and all greenery is responding accordingly. As so often happens following a day when pilgrims all pile up at the same time, I found myself comparatively free to operate without hoop skirts and really that helps out a lot when spading and swinging a hoe....

0300

6022

Mrs Nellie - J. ✓  
re B.L.C. mss.

Thursday, April 9th, 1953.  
memorandum: the following two enclosures are the thing.....

The South Carolina letter, while nice, isn't of any special interest unless one should be in the market to buy an old private plane or sell a new fangled one. And the note from James M. Cain, while equally charming, contains little of interest except as an example of how even an historian can be wrong in his deductions if he doesn't have all the facts. He infers there was no water in Cane River, following the switch of Red River from its former bed. From Leston's diary in the 1850's we know that boats were making regular trips up and down Cane River and here in the Binery there is a picture of a rather large steamer, taken just below Melrose at 24 mile ferry, and the year is 1899. Besides, the present generation of Henrys used to hobnob with the steamboat captains, operating their cotton boats up and down the river and stopping often at the Melrose landing.

But the letter that is of primary interest is the one from Adam Marco. Perhaps we ought to have a copy or two of the paragraphs dealing with the manuscript of B. L. C.'s opus, for it might be nice to paste one in the Charles Sydnor biography of B. L. C., and another in the B. L. C. Geographic Survey which is the printed volume of the original manuscript of which she speaks. I shall be so appreciative if you will retain the original letter, for I instinctively feel that your filing system is ever so much more trustworthy than mine. Once there may be need for this letter, only once, but it will serve as the most vital evidence of the transfer of this valuable document from B. L. C.'s granddaughter.

I am under the impression you may have a copy of Charles Sydnor's "Gentleman of the Old Watchtower". If so, if and when some free moment should be yours, you might consult the index to discover on what page Sydnor mentions other was up to, and then there was the watch tower, but that can wait.....



6023

the compiling of this manuscript. Years ago I recall Madam Brandon telling me how mightily B. L. C. wailes labored on the manuscript and the drawings just one hundred years ago it is summer when during that fateful year of 1853, the wailes household and the town of Washington, --not to mention the rest of the country from New Orleans to New York, were being ravaged by yellow fever and yet in spite of the illness in his own family and all the attendant drawbacks, B. L. C. plodded along to bring it to fruition through his own composition and the printing of Lippincott, however that name may be spelled, and how the manuscript within the following twelfth month metamorphosed into the published work.

If this original manuscript were owned by the State of Mississippi, it would probably be classed as one of its highest treasured items. Naturally, the University of North Carolina which owns the original B. L. C. wailes diary would find the original of this volume a jewel greatly to be sought after. I have no idea if private collectors of old and rare manuscripts would bid much for its possession, but what with the drawings included with the manuscript, --both in the authors own hand, this added factor would undoubtedly make the dual attributes of more than ordinary interest.

And then, of course, on a more mundane level, there is the obvious use to which this transfer might be put as a news item or an article for the Ricayuna or some such. Some sort of a lop-sided parallel might be contrived as between the difficulties under which B. L. C. labored during the summer of yellow fever and the hobbles which the recipient of the manuscript has scuffled a hundred years later in rounding up data and design for another sort of historical record. The reproduction of a page of the wailes drawing of the cotton plant in juxtaposition to a sketch of some contemporary cane river thing might be mildly a resting.

Or, and it seems odd this has never been done, somebody might stir up an article on the famous Melrose library, its treasures in the printed and the pasted volumes, -- and the occasion for the article being the presentation or loan of the famous B. L. C. manuscript to the old plantation treasure house of unique volumes.

But enough of all this. Just as I sealed your letter last night, the telephone rang. It was Mrs. Campbell who asked if she might bring out her three guests, although it was then long after second dark. They came, lingered a while and returned this morning, taking off around 11 for matches and New Orleans. I was working four gardeners and dispensing hospitality at the same time, -- one hand not knowing what the other was up to, and then there was the Cusack thing, but that can wait.....

6024

Friday, April 10th, 1953.

Memorandum: and so we head in to another week end with cloudless skies, balmy weather and everything ideal for road running.

The General came up from Baton Rouge this afternoon to harangue the Society of Science at the college tonight. He came to visit with me along about 2 o'clock but La Mabry and some cronie of hers were here and La Mabry took the opportunity to go into endless details about the golden bees on the Barberini fountain in Rome which interested no one and succeeded only in doing the General and me out of a conversation.

Poor La Mabry proceeded not to pass this way again until September which is likely to be here all too soon. I feel sorry for the poor rich bag, so determined to be entertaining and so successful in boring everyone.

The ladies took off for South Louisiana sometime during the day and will probably get back Sunday or Monday. It was purely coincidental, of course, that this morning Ethiopians were sent to dig bait in the wood lot near the old water tower and that Junior Fugabou was sent to me to ask if some bamboo poles were available for the camp hard by Fugabou's. I gather Celeste has given up the idea of going to Europe this summer and I am glad. It may mean a little, --but not much less camping and all the visitation that implies and I crave none of that from the camp.

The morning post brought a copy of "Chevalier in Texas" or some such by Miss Vivian who passed this way a year or so ago from Austin, searching for ideas on the book she was doing on de Meziere or some such person. It was kind of her to send me a copy.

At the same time I received James Aswell's "Birds and Bees" with some sort of a business written on the fly leaf, for my delectation, I suppose. It was so nice of James to



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6025

send me a copy of such an outrageous book. I trust the inscription doesn't reflect the printed contents of the volume.

Some priest in Alexandria telephoned me this afternoon to ask if he might bring 30 mulatto youths and maidens on a tour Sunday. I named 1 o'clock as perfect and am glad I can accommodate that batch before the afternoon really gets into full swing, for I imagine it will be a busy day, what with Iris enthusiasts returning from Lafayette, following Miss Dormon's hundred dollar song and dance. Then, too, there are a flock of scientists and their wives scheduled for Saturday and you may be sure there will be plenty of Sunday scientists, --and especially their families, who will dwaddle around until Sunday to have a go at the Cane River country. I shall probably be bogged down with Henrys on Saturday but by Sunday afternoon I shall probably be alone on the plantation and that makes everything easier.

A day or so ago I sent Charles Cunningham an African House plate and my messenger reports that an old employee of the Times thought "it would have been such a pretty plate if he hadn't over-drawn it to such an extent, suggesting that colored folks were ever put in pillories and stocks anywhere in the old South". Apparently the woman had never been under Miss Sally's Magnolia home where the old instruments of repression still remain but the woman is a hill billy, --born and bred in Winfield and although hillbillies are inclined to be "mean as hell" toward people of color, they invariably seem self-conscious and impelled to deny any suggestion that slaves ever got mistreated. In a way this seems a bit paradoxical but perfectly clear as a psychological operation. Perhaps she will like the Audubon design better, what with everybody painting birds madly and not the slightest suggestion that anything but sweetness and light obtained in the Oakley neighborhood.

I have some English novel I wouldn't mind reading tonight but there are some letters to be knocked out and after that and a hot bath, I think I shall take a pass at my downy couch, ostensibly to do a bit of radioing but probably doing nothing more than falling asleep. I hope Spring is making vast advances in your immediate neighborhood and that you may get a glimpse of some sometime over the im ending week end. I shall be thinking of you....

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Important

Airmail

Wed. 7/8

Sunday, April 12th, 1953.

Memorandum:

I am forwarding this letter by air simply because I wanted to let you know that by chance I found a transcript of the section in "The Gentleman of the Old Natchez" having to do about the Report on Agriculture, etc., and I don't want you to attempt making said transcription, as mentioned in my memo of Thursday last past.

There is always a certain delight in pleasant coincidences, and I made the most of the one that transpired on Saturday.

Frances Henry was coming out to have dinner, what with the General being here, and so I asked her to fetch along the package which Saturday mornin's post revealed was being held for me by the American Express in town.

She arrived just at dinner time and as we lingered over out coffee afterward, I opened the package she had brought, being delighted that the General who had heard something about B. L. C. wailes when he visited Jefferson College to decline its proffered presidency a few years back.

He was perfectly entranced with what the package contained and asked how it was that such a valuable gift had been addressed to me, whereupon, feeling the opportunity was too good to miss in clinching the fight for the Melrose library, I lied and said with some casualness that although Mrs. Brandon was an old friend, she was also a great believer in plantation libraries and as the manuscript had been composed in a rural setting, I reckon she felt that it was fitting that it should come to an admirer of her grandfather and might find repose in another plantation library. I believe I made the point and subsequent observations on the General's part seemed to confirm the fact that the seed, planted by a few minutes before, had already germinated.

The original manuscript is in a leather folder and must eventually be re-bound, as obviously it had been a hundred years back. Along with the manuscript are the drawings in color from B. L. C.'s own hand, together with swatches of smaller bits of paper on which he had tried out various color combinations, made preliminary sketches of cotton bowls, etc., all of which, of course, make the finished product doubly interesting.



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In spite of the nice little shower around noon, there were ample numbers of pilgrims during the afternoon. As I was approaching the big house from the rear with some old cane river neighbors, I heard an all too familiar whoop from off in the direction of the weaving house, behind which are situated the finest native iris. Mrs. Rogier who has lied her all her life, said she couldn't make out the person very well but she believed it was Sister and that she would go and chat with her for a moment while I divested myself of Mrs. Rogier's guests and stepped into the big house to get a package which Sister had left here. But as I issued forth on the side of the house toward the weaving house, I found Mrs. Rogier but no Sister. Mrs. R. said she never had been able to catch up with her and that she had gone to a car at the front gate with some companion and had driven off.

I assume Sister had been to Lafayette and was probably returning home, --probably high, -- and had stopped to see if there were any likely iris she could lift. Apparently there were, for I found the soil considerably disturbed around the beds where she had been. How nice that I should have gotten no closer, supped across the fence at first dark, the ladies having just returned from South Louisiana. Celeste reports a wonderful time at St. Francisville where she did not see Oakley, but did get to see Lois Lester at Waverly, the Percys at Greenwood, the Sullivans and Browns at the cottage and so on. At the latter place, some man from New Orleans remarked that the Butlers of the cottage were related to the Butlers of Laurel Hill and that the latter place was being sold. I shall have to hear more about that point before I can swallow it; for it may be like Miss Lillian Richell on her last trip, confiding to me that she had heard on good authority in Shreveport that Melrose was being sold, which came as a vast surprise to J. A. when he learned of it. The Butlers have never treated Laurel Hill with the tenderness it deserved but one always fears that a shade of sentiment might save a few elements in such a place that would be swept away if the plantation were sold to a bank or some such personal concern.

Tonight the stars are peeping through veils of mist and perhaps we shall have sunshine in the morning that will warm things up a little, even though the present cool spell is ever so pleasant if not especially conducive to making planted thing jump.

Perhaps I did, perhaps I did not mention that the old magnolia by the side gate outdid itself this year by getting two days ahead of April 12th in unfolding its great ivory globes. April 10th is really quite early for this always inspiring spectacle and for the next couple of months yucca is going to have its fireplace banked with magnolias.....

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Monday, April 13th, 1953.

Memorandum:

It never rains but it pours, and yet after yesterday's delightful little shower, it has been cloudless today, although the sun never got the thermometer much about the 60's. But it inclined to pour in another direction. Ora telephoned me this morning, saying she felt moved to attempt some magazine article and wondered if I had any suggestions. I told her of the new Wailes gift and suggested she use it as a peg on which to hang an article about the Melrose library which, as a librarian she ought to be able to handle skillfully enough, and as the Melrose library is the only plantation one of distinction, it might for something to catch an editor's eye, if handled adroitly. She thought the idea good and came down to see me this afternoon, --and to see the original Wailes manuscript. I did act a few paragraphs to her as a suggestion for getting the thing started and she left for home to ponder the thing and to talk it over with K. P.

As I returned to Yucca, after seeing her to the gate, intent on lending encouragement to a couple of gardeners, my telephone rang. Marshall, Texas, was calling. Carolyn said she had just finished the "I Live in a Museum" article and wondered if she might read it to me before sending it off. Impracticable Carolyn... she was merely being kind, thinking I might have no one to read the thing to me. But the point she stressed was that she wanted to get it off to the Post in tonight's mail. And so, over long distance, she read the article, and I must say it sounded wonderful. She was racing so fast, however, that I couldn't get a word in to suggest a couple of alterations here and there, and so I told her the truth, that at such a speed and such a distance, it --struck me was splendid. What a way to proof read an article of such length. Carolyn said she planned to go to Waco this coming week end, and I told her I would be there to see her.



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that that she hoped that Helen would plan to get over this way on the following week end and that she would come, too, and remain Monday, following Helen's departure, to get to work on the Cane River art cle.

Perhaps I had better get in touch with Ora and suggest the undertake a Cane River article, which might be one way of moving Carolyn in the right direction.

Mosalind Aswell telephoned at 11:15 this morning, a king if she might bring a couple of St. Louis people down so they could get back to town for a 1 o'clock dinner engagement. I told her I could see her not earlier than 12:15. She arrived at 11:45, and I asked her to sit with her friends until after I had dined. They did and left here at 1:20 for the 1 o'clock appointment in town for dinner. Their hostess couldn't have been more annoyed at their lateness than I at their earliness.

She said James had been talking with Colliers during the morning and the story, -- "How to have run with \$100,000,000.00" would appear either on the 27th of the current month or the first issue in May. She said Carl Little of the Houston Press had borrowed a picture of the African house which I had loaned her too far back, as he wanted to use it in an article he wants to do about the Cane River country. She said something about her own efforts at putting the African house in a picture she was working on something about a portrait, but none of that was clear to me and as her guests were becoming restive for their dinner date, I did not hold them back.

In spite of these interruptions and a couple of other sets of pilgrims, I was surprised to discover at the end of the day I had really succeeded in getting quite a bit of gardenig done, although my time spent with helpers at the hoe were or was so not enough, and usually continued "encouragement" accomplished much more than absentee-ism.

A friend, passing this way, had recently been the guest of the contractor in Baton Rouge who had built a new home for a certain General and his wife. The contractor declared that he and all his men had been just about driven crazy by the endless fussiness of the new home owners. It seems the wife insisted on examinint ever one of the 165,000 brick used and the General had a pink tile bath done over, - re-set, - three times. An ancient expert doing the job, in all seriousness, finally explained to the owners: "The trouble with both of you is that you are both going through a change of life but will be alright in a few years, - which is certainly taking down the canal a bit, I should say...."

1800

6030

Tuesday, April 14th, 1953.

Memorandum:

Long before getting inside this envelope you have noticed that the new ribbon is standing me in good stead. I suppose I shall be having the other typewriter before long, but in the mean time, this one is jogging along nicely, and what with the new ribbon, I shall always have this one in working order, even when the antiquated machine serves merely as a spare. It is such a comfort to know the ribbon is fresh and the whole thing thanks to your thoughtfulness, all ready for action when ever circumstances warrant.

Imagine my surprise at finding myself in town this morning. I telephoned the Chamber of Commerce that I would present the organization with a set of Cane River plates and the President of the Chamber, the Mayor and the Secretary were awaiting me, along with some other people. We had a very pleasant little sitting and I was back home again before 11, which was just as well, since there were people from Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas waiting me and I squeezed in a breeze tour before dinner. Immediately afterward a very pleasant Dr. and Mrs. Jansen from some place in Michigan appeared. Dr. Jansen had been reading "Old Louisiana" while he and his wife were wintering in Florida and the book, plus what he had heard from people about Melrose, impelled the couple to try a roundabout trail on their way north to stop by here. Being thus prepared for absorbing what they had journey so far out of their way to see, they were altogether entranced, and tonight are heading back home well satisfied. I believe that the trip had not been made in vain.

The weather remained rather cool all day, in spite of the bright sunshine. But tonight at 10, it is cloudy, and a warm breeze from the Gulf has jacked up the mercury in the thermometer to five degrees higher than it was at its maximum during the day. I suppose we may have a bit



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of rain before morning, and another little shower, following Sunday's, would do no harm and would probably delight the planters.

I had a telephone from Shreveport, -- the Sequicentennial people, asking for ante bellum souvenirs to swell the Natchitoches section of the celebration. I told them I would cast about and see what I could find that might be suitable.

A letter from Rock Hall included a copy of the letter sent you regarding the sketches of the Audubon-Oakley and the Natchitoches plates. And so by now you will have seen the Natchitoches design which may or may not have any merit. I hope it has enough stuff in it to appeal to the average tourist for whom it was primarily designed. I find it difficult to get in enough stuff to suggest the salient features of the town and still avoid making the thing too "busy". The few attempts I have ever seen at including half a dozen points of interest, seem to have been fairly unsuccessful in that the whole composition has turned out a blur. The effort in trying to avoid a fusion of entities seems to be the point on which one should labor. But whether the thing turns out to be any good or not, it will probably be the only plate of its kind on the Natchitoches market for a while, and if it isn't too dreadful, it will probably get sold in the initial output at least.

I should imagine the Audubon Oakley thing ought to sell easily enough at Oakley at least but I don't suppose it will have much appeal beyond the confines of the Felicianas. Like the African House design, it is something the average pilgrim can get his teeth into and it's that first-glance appeal that will probably turn the trick.

I hear from Millsbaugh Drug that sales haven't been too brisk of late, -- although I chance to know three or four people who have bought all four plates available within the past week, and they say that at the moment, the Cane River Country plate seems to be appealing most to tourists.

I am so glad it is warm tonight, for apparently the rattle of my typewriter has annoyed my neighbors dwelling beneath this floor -- or perhaps there has merely been a little family squabble. Be that as it may, the aroma of skunk is impressive and I am starting an electric fan to ease the "perfume" into the grand out of doors. This is a poor letter, but perhaps I shall do better on the morrow. I hope Spring is making itself felt all about you....

6032

Wednesday, April 15th, 1953.

Memorandum: Among the cherriest notes I know are the first warbling of the orioles on the day they return in the Spring. When I went with the mail this morning, the liquid notes rained down with the sunshine, filtering through the pale new leaves of the pecane trees across the fence, and they set the tone for my heart the balance of the day.

While waiting for the mail at the store, and it wasn't worth waiting for, I broke off foot length of string and had quite a bundle. I draped them on the Chinese magnolias, crepe myrtles and nandinas in the neighborhood of the sugar pot and before I had finished the wonderfully delightful notes, identical with those heard earlier, came trickling down from the grandiflora hard by, and withdrew leisurely but directly so these housebuilders could begin rounding up their construction materials.

Only today did I learn that the Presbyterians ladies, scheduled to converge on me Friday afternoon, will probably number about 125. It never dawned on me when I accepted their request for a tour that Shreveport would be represented. It is said Mrs. Wenk is prominent in that quarter which makes it appear the afternoon may well be quite a fulsome one.

We had a delightful shower between 4 and 5 this morning, followed by an ocean of sunshine all day. I shall hold the thought we may have a more prolonged rain on Friday, beginning, say, around 1 o'clock in the afternoon and continuing for three or four hours which ought to wipe out and wash away all Presbyterians within miles.

In cleaning up trash from the interior of an old building today I found 8 or 10 wooden floats about the size of goose-eggs or perhaps a little larger. In times gone by, there were trunks on heavy chard, -- they are



pierced through the center the long way, - and to this cord was attached the net used for seining fish from the river, - the wooden floats keeping the net up to the surface of the water. Heaven only knows how long these old wooden "goose eggs" had been hanging away in this old building and it goes without saying they bore dust of centuries and dirt daubers nests without end, but it took only a few minutes, after dipping them in water, to bring them back to their ancient cypress prettiness and after I had strung them on a substantial wire, I set them afloat in the bit sugar cauldron, placing the water hyacinthes inside the circle thus formed, so that the pot takes on a surface twist that is delightfully old timey and altogether arresting.

in casting about for something suitable to loan to the Louisiana Purchase celebration's educational branch, in which matchitoches will be represented, I could perhaps do worse than to send along the portrait of the Black Swan. With an appropriate card attached, and perhaps a copy of the Piegaye article about the lady, a note of color might well be sturked at the gathering together of material which otherwise might not include any personality of color. Somewhere or other I have some early matchitoches news items appearing in ante bellum papers, and these might lend interest to whatever is being assembled.

Poor Juanita was deep in depression yesterday when, a week after the scuffle had taken place, she learned for the first time that her eldest son, X. O., - just turned 17, - was said to have attempted to satisfy certain biological impulses reportedly rampant in Spring, by trying to push down Bertha Bluff who, oddly enough complained bitterly about the business. The hilarious aspect of the incident is to fact that Bertha Bluff, perhaps 60, is the skinniest, most unattractive individual in miles around, and the episode took place in the shadow of the onkey-tonk, which was wedged out with attractive young damsels. Everyone but Juanita, who laughed at the mention of the business naturally, the mother found it difficult to find anything funny about the performance. What interested me in hearing the matter discussed by colorful speech by people of color was the use of the phrase, -- "He sure was out a-pilfering the ladies". I have never heard the word, - pilfer, - used in such a meaning and of course I am curious to know how such a word ever came into use by untutored souls and how they happened to apply it in reference to attempted rape. But it's time for me to "pilfer my pillow", and accordingly I fold herewith.....

little closer to the shore of Lake Superior. Thursday, April 16th, 1953.

Memorandum: On the 15th of June 1915, I was quite unprepared for the appearance of Carl harness about 6 o'clock this morning. He brought a Mr. Sherman, brother-in-law of the mollard girls of 721 North Peters, Norman, with him. It seems that madam harness's mother, living in Virginia, broke her hip and so, Carl and Lillian drove there from California and Lillian will remain in Virginia for a little while. Carl, in the meantime, drove back to Oklahoma and he and Mr. Sherman, having heard of the excellence of fishing at Black Lake, just above Matchitoches, drove down there but what with the cold weather, the fishing was no good. And so they drove down here to see me this morning, planning to return to Norman this afternoon, after which Carl will return to San Diego, where he does get around. I liked Mr. Sherman just as well as I like Carl and I was thankful Louisiana had trotted out the sun, even if the cold was too much for me. This was Mr. Sherman's visit to Louisiana and it is always a pleasure if that first impression isn't too freeing. I was glad the Knipmeyers came while the others were out here, for my telephone got to jangling and conversation in the other room could go along without my presence. It seemed to be an all Louisiana Purchase morning. First off, some lawyer in Shreveport telephoned, speaking for the Louisiana Purchase Committee up yonder, saying that they are expecting to receive the French Consul General from New Orleans and some member of the French Ministry next week, or perhaps he said week after next, and that those gentlemen had asked if, during their Shreveport visit, or afterward, on their return to New Orleans, they might have arrangements made for another visit to Matchitoches and Melrose, with a view to going into some kind of a huddle with the town fathers and asking if it would be among those present, or, if more convenient for me, if I would receive them down here. I told the speaker I would receive them here. I assume Louis XIV. is getting a



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little closer to the shores of Cane River and what details as to his precise situation when he arrives in Natchitoches should be handled by the Mayor and Council, it seems to me, and I am quite willing to merely dispense hospitality at Melrose after the business in town has been determined and finally settled.

No sooner did I hang up on that conversation than the Natchitoches Chamber of Commerce telephoned me to ask if I objected to the plates in the Cane River series being featured in the Natchitoches section of the Louisiana Purchase thing being held in Shreveport. I didn't. It seems that while colonial and ante bellum elements in the region are being stressed by the Natchitoches contingent, it was felt that the Cane River plates lent themselves to advantage for what they have in mind. --hence the request.

Of the enclosures, Kobina's was the surprise and I am hoping if you both are able to establish contact, you may have fun bending a biscuit together and comparing notes on mutual friends. As your grapevine, probably, functions much more efficiently than hers, you will probably be able to pass along more news about Cane River personalities than Ann Gibson, Annie's husband, dropped in unexpectedly from Montgomery, La., to ask if he could accompany the graduating class of the school there when they pass this way early in May. He is a tiresome person but a few minutes of him is amusing, as, for example, when I asked him how Annie was making it, he said that she was just fine, but hadn't been feeling well all Spring but was hoping to get better by the time summer arrived. Thirty years ago, to free herself from uncertainty that goes with the school teaching profession, Annie married John who was old enough to be her father, and had a fine red automobile. John lost the automobile almost immediately but they "found" a baby and Annie has gone on teaching school and John has kept right on being old enough to be her father.

Mrs. Charles Wood telephoned from Natchitoches, saying she was going to Shreveport in the afternoon and wanted to inquire if she could do any shopping for me. She couldn't. And why she asked me I can't imagine, since she never did anything of the sort on my behalf. She said she had seen Rosalind Aswell last week and they had discussed the dominant color combinations they felt would best suit my portraits and she asked me what colors I thought most suitable. I told her I hadn't the slightest idea, and further, I did not tell her Madam Aswell had been to Melrose earlier this week. What in the world is that portrait business a goin' about. I cannot imagine, since nothing has been mentioned by the artist to me about it, and I would suppose I might be considered an interested party to the business. So things turn and so I fold my beard and call it a day.....

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Friday, April 17th, 1953.

Memorandum

How nice to find the fat envelope, as of the 2th, in today's post, and how good it is to get a picture of what you are up to and how things buzz. All the news you passed along was of prime interest, and I thank you for keeping me informed on so many fronts.

And thanks for letting me know about the missing Memo of the 25th. Let us hope it got into the trash basket and not in another's envelope. I wrote Annie some time back but as the letter did not come out the way I intended it, I put it aside, expecting to re-do it shortly but I guess a week went by before I got around to re-phrase the thing, after which I destroyed the one I had intended writing. Perhaps it was the memorandum of the 25th I actually burned. I hope, let us "hold the thought" it contained nothing especially confidential.

My mail has been running from 8 to 12 letters a day during the past 6 or 8 weeks and it is possible I mis-sent one, but while I have done just that on one occasion, --to Robina several yrs ago, --and never mention it to her, -- so it is possible I did the same thing on the 25th, but if luck is with us, the thing was simply mixed up with the holding shelf items, and so never went anywhere.

I'm so glad you were listening in on the Othello business, for I heard it, too, and liked it. I'm so glad you mentioned the Robeson performance and that would be something I should really enjoy seeing any old time.

and was so glad to know about it and the names of some of those attending. I shall never get over how the radio concentrates so eternally on unheard of places in Korea with ever single broadcast and never mentions things, such as the service you mentioned, for I'm sure a heap of listeners could do with a heap less of unknown and meaningly geographic place names in Asia, and a little more about day to day matters transpiring within the realm of interest to everyone on home ground.



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you ask about the azelias. Some were planted at yucca, the balance at Arenbourg. And thanks to the mildness of the season, and perhaps especially because of the absence of intense heat, they all seem to have prospered and by now appear firmly established. I shall continue to coddle them a bit, however, and trust their initial course may be ruggedly maintained.

It was so kind of you to refer to the cameo in the expressions you employed. I am re-assured by your statement that you had admired them in the past, for when I placed the original request that one be picked up if a likely one should appear, I wasn't too sure if you were fond of them or not, but now my doubts are swept away and it goes without saying that I am entranced that you are so pleased.

The Wenks came for supper. Being civil to them is certainly difficult. La bag said she had called to me on Sunday but that I had been too busy with pilgrims to get away to speak with her. I am glad the package I had for her was still in the library where it did not necessitate a trip on anyone's part to yucca. She says she is sending a couple of people to see me on the morrow. I am quite sure she will come along, too, if it is nothing more than to muddy the waters. She was generally sweetness and light to me but denounced Juanita for having cooked the roast the way she did, --so becoming for a guest, it seemed to me.

I am glad to have the clippings and shall return the yucca business in this letter or later and shall pass along the clipping on so thoughtfully enclosed for Mrs. Coombs who will vastly appreciate it both for its content and for its demonstration of your kindness.

It occurs to me that Annie Gibson might have been the one who got the memo of the 25th, if it was not destroyed. I shall inquire of her on the point.

And may I thank you for having been so thoughtful as to send along the copy of the Pilgrimage article. I think I have use for it right now in connection with an article quite outside anything Carolyn has been working on, and although some of the present article's contents so far as ideas were concerned, may have been employed in Carolyn's article, I can put the present material not use to good advantage, I believe.

It has been such a pleasant day, much high wind, many Presbyterians, etc., but it is the letter that counts, and again I thank you for having done so much to make my day a happy one..

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Sunday, April 19th, 1953.

Memorandum: I heard only the middle of invitation to learning, what with interruptions at both ends, but what I did hear about Manon interested me ever so much. It's a book about which I know nothing, having seen the general story as presented by the New York and Paris operas, and according to today's discussion, the opera gives but a sorry distortion of the real problems set forth in the book. I suppose I have remarked before that I have always wondered why the stage designers for the last act never fail to have Manon and de Grieux pass out in a barren waste land, usually punctuated here and there by a scraggly cactus and some huge boulders. The sections of Texas, likely to be stumbled over by any 19th century travelers toward the Gulf area could never possibly land them in a place of such desolation. I suppose the sets are contrived with a view to contrast as much as possible the opulence that usually characterizes all the foregoing acts and to heighten the tragedy. I was glad the commentators remarked on the fact that de Grieux seems to be the personality of Apollinaire in the story which makes it seem a bit odd that the opera should have carried Manon's name, --as well as the novel itself, since the piece of baggage herself was merely the vehicle through which the most important personality of de Grieux was served up for the world's consideration.

Demand Mrs. John Kyser arrived about 10 minutes before the program had finished, strangling Manon so far as I was concerned, right then and there. They said the color films of the magnolias (Chinese) were a great success and they thought the light perfect for taking shots of the poppies and day lilies, with Madam Kyser and me careening about in waves of double pink poppies and golden day lilies.



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As they had planned to take back to town with them the things for the Louisiana Purchase exposition, and wanted to make notes concerning various details, I left them long enough to take myself across the fence to dine. I found things at an unpleasant pitch for sometime between 11:0 and 12:30, somebody had passed by that establishment to inquire about a tour, and vast consternation was expressed about the ensuing fair weather ahead and how horrible the summer was going to be with interruptions such as that, etc., etc., and that J. M. had simply got to close down Melrose. He agreed, as I have heard him do before in response to such tirades and I suppose nothing will come of it, but it does make one pause to ponder on the chances of rate and how stupidities can be created effecting so much by such scatter brains.

Back at Ruca, the Kysors were going over the screen carrying the pictorial map of Louisiana and expressing vast admiration for the impression it created. It was only after some talk they very delicately hinted that if only it could be in the Natchitoches section of the exposition, it would be the one thing that would give just the proper tone. I told them that they might include it if they cared to, and they seemed surprised that I would let the thing out of the house and delighted to have put across their wish with such adroitness. I didn't think the thing would go into their car, what with all the cameraphanalia and the sleek swan, the cane river plates and sketches, etc., but we finally got the covered wagon rigged up and they were off.

Saturday morning's guests included a woman from Shreveport and a man from Texas, going to Cloutiersville for dinner and then with their hostess and offspring, planning to journey up to Briarwood for the afternoon of "Old Virginia". Mrs. Jones was doing so well earlier in the week, I reckon she must go be about flattened out by today, after such a visitation. If you should be seeing Mobina after reading the above paragraph, do pass the news along to her, as she will probably have some pertinent observations to make on the subject. I got out fact after fact engaged to come and see me, I'll even get further telephones from Shreveport inquire as to whether Thursday or Friday would be more convenient for me to receive the Washington and New Orleans officials as Melrose. I told them to contact the Mayor of Natchitoches and finish plans for the official visit there and that I would take them whenever Natchitoches got the statue thing settled. As I see it, statues of Louis XV don't grow on every bush but a pilgrimage can be trumped up at any old time....

ni shoda gineerac em bar roayr maban ditiw, seill yab  
seill yab seill yab seill yab seill yab seill yab

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Mon Nelle 4/14/53  
orig. also rid.  
5/3/53

Monday, April 20th, 1953.

Memorandum: The bitter weather continues. It was 40 again this morning and the little cotton that is up looks as though it had changed its mind and decided to shrivel back into the ground.

but there's no great loss without some small gain, as the old saw has it, in proof whereof a 6 year old child up Bermuda way picked up a cotton mouth moccasin just behind its head and brought it along the bank to where some fishermen were standing. Apparently the cold had made the reptile semi-dormant,-- which made it pretty lucky for the child.

Nothing in the garden seems to have been effected by the slight frost of last night. And somethings seem to be growing in spite of the general slow down in that department because of Sunday's and today's chill. A while back Celeste gave me a piece of spearmint from the bed she has growing under her breakfast window. During the summer she says she usually throws a bucket of water at it occasionally, and the sprigs attain a pleasant growth of 6 or 7 inches. The piece she gave me 6 or 8 weeks back, I stuck in the ground across the path from the big bauldron. Late this afternoon, --between pilgrims, as it were, -- I thought I would see if the transplanting had finished it off. There were some rather tall things growing around the spot I thought I planted the thing, -- some iris and other plants, which I brushed aside in search of the mint beneath. I couldn't find it, but as I pushed the taller stuff around, a familiar aroma of mind came up to me and only then did I notice that the plants two and a half feet high I had been parting in search of the stuff was actually the mint itself, -- a height which seems remarkable in view of its former stature and its comparatively recent transplanting.

Juanita remained at home today, -- a sore tooth, and we dined and supped across the fence. At supper I told Celeste of the Jack-in-the-beanstalk element in the transplanted mint, but



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she said frankly she couldn't imagine such dimensions.

Andy has been having trouble with a back tooth for some time and on Saturday he took courage in both hands, and for lack of transportation to take him to town to a real dentist, he caught a truck ride to Cloutierville where Mr. Wenk said he would work on it. He neverly killed Andy, crushed and mangled his gums and finally succeeded in breaking off the tooth, after which he dismissed the patient, telling him he would have to get somebody else to extract the remained x of the broken molar. Andy accordingly spent Sunday in bed, after walking three miles of the way home, following the Cloutierville ordeal, and remained in bed today. Murellia passed this ay to tell me that Andy said he would try to make it this afternoon to help me with gardening, but I sent her flying home to tell her brother to stay put. This is the second or third time one of my friends has experienced the same "misere" from the same hands, and I think the whole thing outrageous.

Long before this I had intended telling me how much I appreciate your thoughtfulness in passing along word regarding the variations in the shades of blue appearing on the different items in the Gane River series. Naturally I had wanted and expected the coloring to be identical in each creation, and immediately on receiving your information on the matter, I communicated with Rock Hall, setting forth my wishes. By speaking of this at the time you did, I believe my letter, which I sent by air, probably reached the manufacturer in time to bring the shading in the Town of Matenitoches and the Audubon-Oakley plants into line with one or another of some of the designs preceding these two latter ones.

With the knowledge that the shading has not been identical throughout, I shall be prepared, if there should be re-orders, to make special emphasis that particular attention be paid to this matter.

throughout this little conversation a tall vase of milk glass sitting here on my desk before me has remained quite staid, while the lovely big white marillie (The Lord knows how that is spelled) have been gently nodding with each tap of the keys. There are 4 huge pure white flowers on each stalk, and as I used not greener

for the bouquet, only the stems suggest anything but white, and the entire ensemble is really quite ravishing. I so wish I might bounce it in the direction of little Miss Lee....

6042

re: B. L. C. Wailes mss.

section I only saw her a few minutes. She said she wanted to tell me something she thought I would find amusing.

The said Mr. Ingham was passing by the Milwaukee Emporium recently and was Mr. Millican pointing out some merchandise in the window which was loaded down the new Memorandum. When Mr. Ingham passed, he heard Mr. Millican

How doubly nice to find both your Wednesday night and your Friday noon letters in today's post. I suppose a mail pouch must have traveled again to Melville, for there were two or three other letters, as in the case of your Wednesday one, which should have been here yesterday when no 1st class mail was forth coming.

How like you to have somehow found time to done all the research work, following the news concerning the gift from Miss Nellie. Perhaps we may use some of it to advantage eventually if and when we ever decide to have the folio in which the pages are bound, or rather were re-bound and which down through the years have become loosened the cover of full leather and the manuscript, apparently, was first bound in 1853 - at least the date on the back of the book bears that date, while as we know, the printed edition didn't appear until the following year. I have saved the notice from the express company, notifying me of the arrival of the package in watch to case. I thought the original letter from Miss Nellie might well be incorporated in the re-binding, and perhaps some of the notes from the Sydney biography. But I believe some of the pages of the original manuscript are not in order and in the event that an article about the 100th anniversary of the book should be composed and printed, that also might be bound along with the rest, -- the re-binding to be in the original covers which have given way with loving turning of the manuscript down through the years on Miss Nellie's part. All of this can be given thought any old time, perhaps this year, perhaps next or whenever, any time you should like to borrow an extra five minutes to turn through the thing, I shall be glad to send it along to you by ordinary parcel post which, I think, is perfectly safe.

of it being quite new. I had not heard of the death of Malvina Thompson on the 12th, and I thank you for passing that item along, too.



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Rosalind passed this way this noon. I take it she was going on to dinner some place or other, perhaps in the Bermuda section. I only saw her a few minutes. She said she wanted to tell me something she thought I would find amusing.

She said her husband was passing by the Millsbaugh emporium recently and was Mr. Millsbaugh pointing out some merchandise in the window which was loaded down the Aswell books and Lestan plates, and just as he passed, he heard Mr. Millsbaugh remark to the man and woman: "There goes Mr. Aswell now."

The latter stopped in the hotel, which is next door and a couple of seconds later the couple came in and the lady, rushing up to him, exclaimed:

"Oh, Mr. Aswell, we have just bought one of your plates of the Kane River series and I wonder if you will be so kind as to give me an autograph on this slip of paper so I may paste it on the back of my plate."

Just so long as some nitwit doesn't come rushing in to rouse a one day, pushing "The Birds and the Bees" in my direction, asking me to autograph my book.

And speaking of books, your advice regarding the forthcoming novel "Moloch" Oliver opus is certainly a surprise. For a long time she has been fiddling around with "lost plantations" and I suppose this may well be the subject of her new effort.

Both Jaunita and Andy are still in the bed, but not the same one, but more or less from the same complaint, dental. And so with an extra guest for two, we all dined and supped across the fence today. Celeste left at 9 o'clock, or a little before, to spend the day at bridge at Manny or Mansfield or some such place but Madam Regard was quite on the job and dispensed worried food and unexpected callers before each gathering at the board with infinite grace and charm. When I left her about midnight, the bridge player hadn't shown up as yet.

You asked about the Cusack's part of the bargain which I failed to get across in a recent report, due to running off the track. The bargain was kept, but the original account had been so distorted as to make one wonder why the matter had ever been brought up. The picture appeared, -- just the picture of any woman of the gay 90's era, -- quite insignificant and nothing to suggest that the subject was anything but white, and the thing was merely a photograph, perhaps 18 inches by 18, in a most ordinary frame. Three members of the family are

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Re: Carl Little Article  
in the Houston Chronicle

wednesday, April 22nd, 1953.

Memorandum: The Chamber of Commerce telephoned twice, -- once to say that the Natchitoches material assembled for the Louisiana Purchase business in Shreveport turned out to everybody's satisfaction, including the Curator of the museum where it is being displayed, and although the original intention had been to show the material for two weeks only, it now seemed better to hold it for four weeks, what with some other civic festivities being planned. I told them I was in no rush to get back my plunder.

And then they telephoned again inviting me to the tea to be given the Washington officials and those from New Orleans on Friday. The hour named was 5 but I gave instructions as to points to be called to the attention of the visitors as to where I felt the Louis XIV thing should be erected and as the officials had expressed a desire to meet me, I would receive them at Melrose at 6:00 or 6:30, as it is assumed they will be traveling South following the Natchitoches tea. The gardens should be pretty

flattened out with fever. One is making good progress, but the lady doctor recommended that if the other had not shown favorable signs this afternoon, he should be taken to a Shreveport hospital. She says she had better forego any attempt at writing until her household gets straightened out a little, and as she herself tends to wilt under too much nursing on others, I think she is quite right.

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along about sunset, and in the event the official time-table gets into a tangle, they can make Melrose the next morning if they remain in Maito itoches all night. - or, if they are bound by other engagements to proceed to New Orleans that night, they can skip me and will have missed nothing.

There are the Mayor and the Board of Aldermen who are acquainted with my ideas as to the placing of the statue, and it seems to me good politics to let them give the impression the selection of the site is their doing. After all, there is honor enough for all, and if I don't appear at the tea, many of those present will feel that the selection of the site has been made by responsible town fathers and not by a rural resident of the Parish. How I should like to hear you roll that rural resident business.

I am so glad you advised me in your last letter that you could make use of the two Maito itoches papers which I have been keeping intact, just as they were received, on the holding shelf. I shall get them into the mail on the morrow or on Friday.

In today's post came a copy of the Houston Press, containing the article by Carl Little, --the thing being sent by Joe Henry without comment. The article is pretty outrageous and I am hoping to keep it from the other Henrys in hopes I can pass it off to Joe as nothing of any consequence, holding the thought he may forget about it before he gets over this way again. Although Lyle isn't named, there is a drunken episode in the piece that uses him as the model. As for the part in which I figure, there doesn't seem to be a word of truth in any of it, or in what it says about Miss Cammie's will, etc. Mr. Little made a great blunder in doing this article if, as I believe, he should like to return to Melrose, for if he ever should make the front gate, I should be most careful to say nothing that would suggest anything of consequence on which a tall tale could be hung. And, naturally, with the host being constantly on his guard, the guest is bound to get mighty little by way of atmosphere that is at all pleasant. I haven't the article at the moment, but will send it along in a day or two when it comes to hand. --James having asked me to let him see it. I shall not show it to Celeste or J. H.

I read a couple more pages from Howard Spring's There Isot I No Ammour which I continue to like. I assume Mr. Spring is a British author, as the thing is recorded in London, although I never heard of him before. I learned from something in the novel, referring to the Tschalkovski-von Meek relations that the Wedgewood brothers had given Coleridge, the poet an annuity of 150 pounds, which makes me like Wedgewood creations even more. But the hour dances and I must roll up my sleeves and knock out a bit of correspondence.....

6046

Thursday, April 23rd, 1953.

Memorandum!

How nice to find your Tuesday, the 21st, air mail in this morning's post.

It was so kind of you to let me know so speedily how the Rock Hall business went into a tangle and what the prospects are.

According to a letter from Rock Hall, the Audubon shipment for Oakley went forward on the 17th and the Audubon and Maito itoches items for me were forwarded on the 22nd. I suppose they will require about 10 days respectively to reach their individual destinations.

I advised Mrs. Stirling some time back that a glossy of the Audubon would go forward to her about the time the plates arrived so she might be the drum a little regarding their advent. I have dashed off a notice for the Maito itoches Times to go with the glossy print when it arrives. I haven't a doubt all will come to hand before the plates arrive so that the newspapers can be rigged up appropriately.

I am so glad you like the designs and that you feel they may enjoy a measure of popularity. I am hoping the Maito itoches one will have a tendency to pull the other in the Cane River series with it, but that, of course, is on the assumption that the Town of Maito itoches will have some appeal to the towns people and the tourist alike.

My guess is that the Audubon one ought to sell at Oakley, --modestly but steadily over a period of time if the person presiding over the shop feels inclined to push it. Probably Mrs. Stirling will probably dispose of some, too, in her shop, although I know not if she has many travelers from up and down the land. I am under the impression she may cater to local trade mostly but perhaps some of them, --neighbors and in folk, will want to make use of them as gifts.



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It was good of you to mention seeing Robina on Monday for lunch and I shall be all ears to know how it all turned out. Of course I realize it was mutually pleasant for you both and if I am any guess of news, she might have learned a heap more about Louisiana things from you than you from her.

I think the enclosure or two may be of scant interest. The news from South Carolina was unexpected. It seems that a storm must be writing less and less for it seems months since last we heard from her directly.

The letter from Madam Marco seems to have started out without salutation but I assume it was all there was written to start with, but I hope no pages were lost. As Miss Nellie approaches 90, it is really wonderful how she maintains her correspondence in spite of all her handicaps. I am hoping the ear phones may work to perfection for her, as I believe they will, for I feel certain she will get no end of pleasure out of all the relaxation the reading machine will afford her.

Three sets of pilgrims whom I had never seen before, and hailing from different States, all volunteered the information today that I was to receive the Washington and New Orleans officials in town on the morrow. Of course I am not dreaming of going to Natchitoches and if their schedule doesn't get so gummed up they never arrive here before dark I shall be amazed.

The weather remains in the 80's and what with partial cloud coverage today with now and then a veil of mist passing this way, the humidity is high and I appear to be sleepy. I should like to read a page or two of the Howard Spring opus which I like but something tells me I shall never get beyond the first few paragraphs. Everyone passing this way is reading "Desiree" or whatever is the title of that popular Napoleonic novel or biography or whatever that seems to appeal to everyone undertaking it. I am impatient to have the Feuchwangler study of Jean Jacques Rousseau come to hand and I am hoping we shall not have to wait too long.

In Natchitoches, people tonight are keeping their doors closed, following the escape last night from a traveling road show of a 22 foot python. There isn't a chance of stepping on the thing anyway, although I suppose one might be able to bump into him. But I must get to work now and thence to bed. ....

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6048

Re: 4-30-53 Wash. - M.O.  
statue

Th.  
Thursday, April 24th, 1953.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your air mail of "later" Tuesday.

Please don't let the matter of the photographs put the slightest ripple on the serenity of your mind. They will come in all good time, and if they arrive before or after the plates, not a bit of difference. The publicity will perhaps spread even wider if the merchandise has been released in advance of the newspaper accounts. But it is quite likely that the photographs will still arrive prior to the plates, since they are forever having a way of dawdling along en route.

If I designate as crack-pot the proposition of racing up and down the East coast like a squirrel in a cage, I feel certain I am simply voicing your own opinion. But it goes without saying that I at the same time appreciate all the potentials and how it may turn out, -- for the sake of peace, -- to do hand springs all over the place, and if that seems imperative, then it will be done, but let us hold the thought that that will not be necessary.

Should there come an abrupt cessation in correspondence from 908, however, it goes without saying that I shall understand completely, thanks to your thoughtfulness in advising me in advance.

The rains came this morning about 10, pleasant ones that never did really stop all day, or at least until 3 o'clock, but often they degenerated into mere mists. The gardens and cotton fields have been benefited enormously and the promise is for more rain on the morrow.

As I had declined the invitation to the tea for the Embassy staff and the Consul General, it wasn't to be expected, in view of the weather, that they should ever make it this far afield.

Eugene and I had supper at 5:30 and I returned to Yucca and rolled up my sleeves to do a bit of weed pulling, what with the rain having ceased, and it was in that situation that



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Washington and New Orleans appeared on my gallery, and quite aside from my surprise that they should have ventured to this remote spot, I was even more astonished when the Counsellor of the Washington Embassy and the Consul General after the initial greetings, brought forth imposing packages from under their arms. --all the items constituting the tea in town, --sandwiches, meat pies (on Friday, too), salades, cakes and Heaven knows what all. I am glad they thereby demonstrated by this gesture that the old flub-dub stuffiness of conventional protocol had been cast aside and although this was their initial meeting, it had been contrived in such a friendly spirited so we toured and talked plantation, --one plantation of color of the old days. And then we sat on the gallery, giving on the white garden, relaxed over a glass of port, --and talked statue. It was all very pleasant and everybody seemed to agree that Louis XIV should remember in Louisiana and that Natchitoches was the spot where his memorial should be placed. M. Seyboux, out of Washington, had been at the court of Juan and Eva Peron in Buenos Aires at the same time Mr. Belle had been there, too. And it was pleasant to find that thread of mutual interest. And I talked with the Consul General about his radio appearance on the same program with Alice Graham, discussing Mme. de Pompadour, and that was fun, too. After all, any sitting with such a group that can welcome Louis XIV and Mme. de Pompadour with genuine enthusiasm is unique and pleasant withal.

In the African House they noticed the plates of the African House and the Cane River Country. They said they had examined them at the exposition in Shreveport that morning with especial interest because they had expected to explore the region, new to them before the close of day, and that they had realized at the time that they would be meeting the individual of whom they had read in the Picayune concerning them. It goes without saying, of course, that I thought it an excellent opportunity to toss some plates into the scales in favor of the 14th Louis and as reminders in the weeks ahead that there is such a place as the Cane River Country.

Thanks to a quiet day, I don't feel so sleepy as usual, and so I shall knock off some mail forthwith and then read a couple of pages from the Howard Spring novel. It has started sprinkling again but I'm glad we had the respite just at the right moment.....

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Sunday, April 24th, 1953.  
Memorandum:

First off, may I invite your attention to the clipping from the Houston Press. And now, having read it, --and if you haven't lost your breath, you might have a glance at Rosalind's letter.

I suppose both of the Aswells must recognize that Mr. Little, as their guest, in a way is their responsibility, and for that reason, they bought probably sense an apology for his article is in order. But perhaps James feels an apology would be a tacit admission of a gaucherie on the part of someone he brought here who was kindly received both at Yucca and later across the fence. Be that as it may, I assume all the talk about St. Louis is designed primarily as a smoke screen to obliterate from my memory what their friend, Mr. Little of Texas, had to write.

Obviously I am quite indifferent as to what he had to make up about me but his throwing of rotten eggs at Lyle and the Estate seems distinctly out of order, and specifically the implication that students of the local college were exposed to such scandal by a visit here.

I shall respond to Rosalind's letter but shall make no reference to the article on the theory that in view of the circumstances, it is for the Aswells to speak of that, not for me.

I can't remember if I mentioned in Friday's memo that Carolyn telephoned from Marshall that afternoon. She said that Helen seems so exhausted at the close of the office day that it seemed better for her not to try to make it over here for a week end, as had been hinted in the last letter or telephone call. -- I can't remember which. But I suppose that hint was contained in a letter from Carolyn sometime back, as I seem to remember writing that I thought Carolyn and I could accomplish more if we didn't try to mix in the social with the other lines of endeavor. Perhaps that line discouraged



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the Waco week end on Cane River. But whatever it was, I am glad they didn't come, for there was enough other stuff cooking without any extras. But Carolyn said she would try to make it here on Monday, --tomorrow, in order that we might do a synopsis on the Cane River to submit to somebody or other, and that is alright by me, although she is so long on preparation that I have slight interest in such preliminaries.

But then Carolyn said something that mildly floored me. She said she had taken the article she had done for The Post with her to Waco last week end and that Helen though it was fine and that she would bring it with her on Monday to go over it again with me before sending it to Philadelphia. I am trying to think just why she bothered to proof-read the thing over the long distance wire a couple of weeks back if she wasn't sending it until heaven knows when. She certainly is a gifted individual but like so many in that category, altogether mighty curious. At the speed she is hitting with this article, we ought to see one on Cane River turned out by 1960 at the latest, I should think.

The day was marvelous, brilliant sun and a cool breeze, but on the plantation is was one of those times when "people all around are making faces, a d all the world's a-jangle and a-jar", especially in the Mack family. Y. C. came dashing by about noon. He said his papa, Beau (A. C.) was trying to kill him. I tried quieting that one and bandaged up his hand which was cut. Later Juanita passed this way, just after her son had departed, saying that Beau was drunk and intending to kill Y. C., and asking if I could write a note to somebody in Shreveport that Y. C. could take with him with a view to getting a job up there. I could do that.

Fortunately things across the fence were serene today, and that helped, especially for supper, for by first dark I was tired from settling negro scufflings, giving too many tours, and turning over a paraphrase in my mind of a line from the Bible: - "Remember the Sabbath Day and keep it (w)holy-- and exclusively for the unpredictable.

Don't bother to send back the Carl Little --I almost said the Harnett Kane, - article. If I ever need to refer to it, I can always get a copy from J. H. to whom Joe sent one.

And now I must roll up my sleeves and toss off a couple or six letters and hope to get them out of the way before Miss Roundtree makes her bow I hope it has been a day of vast quiet and relaxation for little Miss Lee with no road running in sight....

6052

Monday, April 27th, 1953.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Wednesday letter in this morning's post and how kind of you to give me such a comprehensive picture of your bread-breaking with little Miss Denholme.

I am so glad you included the unexpected greeting you received when first establishing contact by telephone. --It was so gay. And I'm glad to have a pen picture also of your selection for a place for dining and some insight as to what the lady planned for her stay in Manhattan.

And thanks, too, for mentioning that the lady leaves Manhattan as of Sunday, last past. I shall knock off a note to her tonight so she may have it on her arrival home.

Today has been one of those perfect ones of this time of year, cloudless and enough breeze to stir to keep the thermometer delightfully steady in the 70's.

There were pilgrims scheduled for 5 o'clock, bringing other pilgrims from El Paso, - and some friends of Celeste shepherding the whole posse. I saw Madam Cloutier, among others, as I passed by the house next door. She said she was coming down to spend a morning with me one of these days. Heaven help me at that sitting. She seems to be gunning for her sister-in-law, Ora, these days, and never seems to realize that everybody likes Ora and accordingly quite bored by the strange, Wenk-like tirades that la Cloutier is forever making a vast and pointless racket over.

I got rid of my part of the entertaining by 8:15, and the waxing moon was something of a help in getting the contingent back across the fence.

I was glad to divest myself of the, in view of my expectation that Carolyn, in accordance with her Friday telephone, was scheduled to arrive almost any time today. Well, that is perhaps when she will arrive, --any time, for it is now a little after 9, and not a peep out of her. Her



6053

unpredictable ways are but old stuff to her friends of longer standing, I suppose, but I shall have to know her years longer before I shall accustom myself to appointments kept 24 hours late, --and the more so in view of the availability of telephones which can be employed for proof reading but not to assist the expectant host straight about failures to put in an appearance.

Thanks to your diligence in discovering the wrong track on which I had embarked in pursuit of the Mount Vernon-Fort Union doe's head, I am returning the the Audubon-Oakley plate as a point of beginning and am pondering on abandoning the Audbon aspect of the series and blazing out a trail in another direction, -- which might tentatively be styled the Old Louisiana Plantation series.. The idea would be to incorporate in each plate a sketch of the plantation home and, as in the case of the Oakley one, to introduce the outstanding historical feature giving the plantation its primary claim to fame. In this series, the border, unlike the one used in the Cane River series, would be the same as that being used in the Oakley one. Oddly enough Melrose, --using the big house as the main architectural subject, might find itself in the Old Louisiana Plantation series rather than the Cane River. But Oakland on the Joyous Coast, would be in the Cane River to round out the Cane River panorama. The Alphonse Prudhoomes who own Oakland today have no money at all and so would not invest heavily in the plate carrying their own mansion while Madam Cloutier, with gobs of cash, must not expect her house to dominate the Joyous Coast item, since in spite of its elegance of interior, Beaufort doesn't lend itself to impressive reproduction as a painting.

Tentatively, I envision the Melrose sketch for the Old Louisiana Plantation series, as somewhat like the Audubon-Oakley thing, with Miss Cammie occupying the Audubon position, busy at scrapbooking, with Lyle in the position of the Beautiful Eliza, tossing off a manuscript. New Orleans and Baton Rouge could probably absorb quite a few of this particular subject and a goodly number of the entire Old Louisiana Plantation series if I should establish contact with the proper retail places. But all this is still nebular in my mind and may or may not take definite shape as I wave my hoe and scuffle around in the unending skirmish of flowers versus weeds, order versus confusion.

But the hour advances and the Sand Man is coming this way, impelling me to fold up at this point and call it a day. The thermometer will touch 86 on the morrow and the Chamber of Commerce say 100 people want to head this way, so I had better grab a bit of shut-eye as against tomorrow's dawn....

6054

Tuesday, April 28th, 1953.

Memorandum:

I suppose the obvious way to keep abreast of contemporary folk ways is to establish contact now and then with the rising generation.

I was in touch with about one hundred of such this afternoon, --Alexandria children whose ages probably averaged about 14.

They were nice children and probably represented a social stratum a little above the average.

to facilitate the tour, I divided them into two groups, each non-touring groups gravitating about the store while its counter part was making the rounds.

Dr. Rand had spoken to the group yesterday, giving them some salient points regarding the geographic and historic aspects of the Cane River country, --a prelude which undoubtedly gave them fertile ground for many a seed to germinate in during the ensuing day in the big road.

They asked intelligent questions, manifested interest in everything, were well mannered and each, on departing, said Goodbye and expressed their pleasure in having been able to visit the plantation.

It was not until supper that I learned from the clerk how each had invested its money during its wait in the store area. Coca Colas were bought with some abandon, -- which certainly is but natural. I was mildly surprised, however, when I learned that they had purchased all the cigars in the store. I can't imagine 14 year olds puffing on cigars and for all I know, they were buying them as presents for their respective papas. It is possible cigars are not sold to youngsters in town, --I don't know, but the investment was unexpected, regardless of the purpose to which they were to be put. But the third item, aside from candy purchases, was



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a new wrinkle in youngster trends, so far as my knowledge is concerned. They bought out the entire stock of nipples for baby's milk bottle. It seems these were employed to attach to the coke bottles in which they were investing, and happy was the youth and maiden to were so lucky as to obtain these items before the supply was all gone. I never tried drinking coke through a nipply, and, as a matter of fact, I can't remember how the sensation struck me when as a baby, I probably was fed through this medium, and at the moment, I cannot but wonder how this fad ever started and find myself curious to know what different the sensation may be in thus consuming the popular liquid.

Somewhat, off hand, the combination of cigars and nipples seems wonderfully in juxtaposition, and a contemporary whimsy that seemingly must be unique.

There was much rumbling of thunder during the tour, but fortunately I got rid of the last of them before the rains began.

I had completely given up all thought of Carolyn appearing this week when, Lo! around 6:30, she appeared.

We have done some general chatting this evening, at the time of incessant cannonading from on high, and I suppose perhaps 4 or 5 inches of water has come down as between 6 this evening and midnight, as I pen these lines.

The weather forecast is for rains tonight and tomorrow, and so far as tonight is concerned, the weather bureau got it right for once at least.

Celeste, Madam Uloutier and a couple of other gals have been planning to spend Thursday at Briarwood on a iris-purchasing outing, but something tells me that is one trip that will not be made this week.

As for the possibility of taking any pictures during Carolyn's visit, that appears to be completely out of the question, and even if the skies should clear ahead of schedule, it is doubtful if we shall be able to get around much, for water is said to be rising rapidly all around. If this letter should be late in arriving, it will probably be due to delayed train service in this area, for the tracks are probably under water by now! Fortunately we are on high ground here and so probably will not get our feet wet....

6056

Wednesday, April 29th, 1953.

All the talk seems to be about the weather, of which we have had so much since last I dipped pen in ink.

Within approximately 6 hours last night, seven and a half inches of rain fell at Grand Score, ten and a half at Alexandria. I figure we received about 9 inches, which is one way of saying there was ample dampness for a single sitting. --540 tons to the acre.

Trees were blown down in various sections in the neighborhood but none on any of our pet properties. The fire engines from Alexandria were blocked off by water when attempting to respond to an urgency call from the local air base where something or other was going up in flames at a great rate, and on the far side of Red River at Montgomery the crack train from Kansas City or St. Louis jumped the tracks, or perhaps the tracks jumped their bed, and a flock of passenger cars alighted off into the mud, killing no one.

It would be superfluous to remark that young ladies formed about the gardens and what with cloudiness obtaining all day, the taking of pictures wasn't to be thought of. Tonight's fore cast for the morrow is continuing cloudiness. Apparently it wasn't intended that cameras should be used at this go-round.

But the situation outside made inside attractive for desk work, and I spent the whole day dictating the main outlines for the Cane River article. Carolyn types with considerable speed and if I speak rather slowly, she can get most of it down without asking me to repeat.

I suppose I rattled off 8 or 10 pages, single spaced, with additional pages, citing chapter and verse, for elaboration and filling when I am not present.

We shall have a rather go at things on the morrow when I shall easily complete the entire framework and a considerable amount of the spaces to be chinked in, as between the main up-rights.



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The thing is being approached with a view to selling it to mollyday as a travel story. We shall open the thing, perhaps, with a description of the wilderness country to the north of watchitoches, being traversed by the tourist, concentrating on the picture presented in times prior to old Shreve and his "bust-up" of the red river raft.

Approaching Grand score, we shall note the physical differences of the country at this point where the "country of the lotus eaters" begins. When we jog along, after pushing the Indian riches for the millionth time off the cliffs, - in the general direction of watchitoches, and after doing that with some thoroughness, we shall jog along over familiar terrain, - along the Joyous Coast, Melrose, Cloutier-ville and bring the thing to a close on the old stamping ground of uncle Tom and his over-worked "Casa".

We have today just about covered everything down to and through the melrose-mulatto territory, and tomorrow we shall have a go at Magnolia, Kate Chopin and on through the malpin domain and perhaps end up on a sour note with the Colfax riots.

Of course the thing will embrace something more than travelogue enumerations, with various points for pondering toosed in, --such speculation as to what there is still remaining along cane river of the 18th century, where progress moseys along sedately, --cotton picker of modern make and new fangled cotton gins in juxtaposition to ancientmule powered cane grinding establishments and fillet concotions from the leaves of the sassafrass tree.

Such are some of the things with which we labored today, and I reckon this recitation makes might dull reading, but it is pleasant to pass along this vignette of how things are operating.

On the side of milder surprises, I was vaguely amazed this morning at 7 during the downpour that celeste should have be-taken herself to town to get a permanent, I suppose, in view of her impending trip to the woods of the Mormon retreat on the morrow, in company with three ladies, including madam Cloutier. I am under the impression they will not make that trip for water is beginning to ooze over the Montrose lane and Bayou Brevelle is probably no more swollen than billions of others between here and the Mormon menage. Thus it would seem we have acquired one pointless permanent, but I reckon it can always pressed (be pressed) into some other setting for admiration or allure. Silly letter, silly subject matter, but perhaps I shall do better on the morrow....

6058

6058

Thursday, April 30th, 1953.

Memorandum:  
The sky was cloudless all day and not a picture could be snapped, what with a curious yellowish fog that permeated the atmosphere, the stuff being a gift from the Texas dust bowl which is blowing madly at the moment, although in Louisiana the breezes reach only 15 or 20 miles an hour. The thermometer touched 87 and the greenery is wonderful, after its 2 inch washing.

I finished dictating the balance of the somewhat elaborate skeleton of the Cane River story, -- perhaps half a dozen single spaced sheets, after which we took to the big road, covering much of the river on both sides, and stopping frequently to jot down additional notes as this or that scene recalled some point or other, not already covered by yesterday's and today's dictation.

We experienced no travel difficulties going to town on this side of the river but high water blocked us when we attempted to reach Bermuda from the cement highway at Cypress, --the lane taken by little Miss Lee when she journeyed from that point in the direction of Bermuda to stop at Beaufort. Returning to the cement highway, we proceeded south and found at Montrose that the water spread like a vast lake from the cement eastward as far as we could see, -- perhaps a mile and a half toward Melrose. For perhaps four miles south of Montrose, the pasture land as far as we could see was submerged, but we were able to turn from the cement into the dirt road at Derry, proceeding northward toward Magnolia and thence back home, making notes throughout the trip along the gravel.

At supper, J. H. for the first time in the 15 years I have known him, was not the first to leave the table. He seemed interested in several points on which Carolyn consulted him, and after Dan, who was down for supper, and Eugene had departed, I, too, withdrew to give the two an opportunity to settle various points. In a letter to Helen a month or so ago, I express the hope that Carolyn would lease her



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farm instead of trying to operate it. Helen, so Carolyn tells me, had advised her along such lines, although I, myself, have never mentioned the subject to Carolyn. It seems that during their post supper conversation, J. H. advised her in like manner, --and I believe, convinced her of the wisdom of such a move. Personally, I think that may be the one way she may retain ownership, being thus freed to do something for which she is much better equipped and trained.

On my recommendation, she took up the matter of doing a book on cotton, - largely pictorial, with a view of having the same contracted for by the Cotton Council. She had brought a publication, sponsored by Shell Oil on the general subject of oil, and thus could readily present her idea for the cotton story. J. H., as a member of the cotton board, told her he was on friendly terms with the head of the agency handling cotton public relations and expected to see him in Memphis on the 24th of May and that he would be glad to take along the oil book, together with a synopsis of what she envisioned for the cotton book. Immediately following her conference with J. H., we set to work making out a rough table of contents for the thing, and felt that this, on top of the cane river story labors, had produced gratifying promises for the day's labors. I must say I felt the greatest compensation for the day's disappointments caused by the dust business, was wonderfully satisfying if nothing more was accomplished than getting the lady to realize the wisdom of leasing her property, and thus save it from further chance to dissolving as a financial asset.

She will head out tomorrow morning, in spite of the promise for fair weather since the weather bureau also states that with the cloudless skies will be the continuation of the dust storms which make photographing anything out of doors impossible.

According to the experts, Red River will attain a height of 33 between Grand Core and Alexandria (33 feet) about May 7th, but I know not if this will mean anything in this area, as I know not the normal height of the water. I am under the impression this area will not be effected, and with the Montrose lane blocking all traffic from the cement, I suppose many a pilgrim, neglecting to start out in this direction by the gravel roads, will be deflected, thereby giving me a measure of freedom over the week-end, --I hope.

Forgive the dullness of this letter. Perhaps the morrow may be better.....

1803

6060

Friday, May 1st, 1953.

Memorandum:

How nice, how nice, how nice.....

In today's post came your elegant letter with Rock Hall correspondence enclosed, along with the films for Rudolph.

And let me rush on to say that in the same post came the equally elegant assortment of photographs, all of which entranced me, too, and for all of which I call down blessings on your head.

I am so sorry that the photographs from Rock Hall were such a source of annoyance to begin with and such a matter of pressure to end with, but I do thank you most heartily not only for having begotten them on my behalf but also for all the "misere" they occasioned.

I had knocked off the squib for the Natchitoches Times concerning the Town of Natchitoches plate and so was able to forward the glossy print along promptly so that it will probably appear next Thursday, - or possibly on the 14th. By a bit of hurrying, I was able to get the Audubon-Oakley one into the mail before the postman had made his rounds down Magnolia way, and so both items went squaring on their way without a day's loss.

It is so kind of you to inquire about photographing the plates whenever they become available but I think for all purposes that I can envision, the photographic work of the sketches coming to hand today are so much clearer than anything to be achieved directly from a plate, that we shall not need to have these two items recorded on film.

Only yesterday did it seem to dawn on Carolyn that the sketch of the Cane River country plate would be ideal for possible illustration in the article on Cane River on which we have been working, and later in the year I may ask Rock Hall



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to send you the finished final drawing for that plate, but  
this need not be undertaken before winter.

It was so thoughtful of you to have some splendid big  
prints made for the leather folio department. I could  
observe these so well and found several features about them  
that delighted and puzzled me, as in the case of the  
one in the bulb garden which shows the weaving house from an  
angle never photographed, and the "Patriarch", - being the  
old, old pecan from which so many pecan grapps were taken to  
augment the M River bassin's important crops of today.  
And the puzzle came in the same picture as to where Grandpa  
might be hiding, for, as I recall, I had stooped down to stroke  
him at the time the photograph was shot, and yet I can't  
find him any where. Perhaps he saw the camera coming and  
ducked behind a narcissus.

Naturally I got vast satisfaction out of your Monday-Tuesday  
news, indicating that flying up and down the coast had been abandoned.  
And thanks for telling me of your final chat with Robina, who  
was all to the good and the unexpected South of the Gulf visitor  
which, at best, couldn't have been too hot. What a hurly-burly  
week you must have experienced and may the impending week end give  
you an opportunity to catch your breath.  
Today's post was fairly heavy, must of it being of little  
interest but some of it will be sent along regardless to keep you  
informed. The Stirling letter is of no consequence but you  
will be glad to see that Helen has taken pen in hand again, and  
I am glad she mentioned the economic raft on which she  
floated through her ordeal was so adequate. Everything she says  
about a Carolyn's farming projects I subscribe to. In fact,  
a couple of months ago I put just such a been in Helen's bonnet to  
re-engage Carolyn with, and by some miracle, the same advice was given  
Carolyn by J. H. last night as they lingered over the supper table,  
so she confided to me later, and it was so easy to prise J. H.'s business  
acumen to her and send her on her way this morning, about convinced  
she is going to leave the place and concentrate on her accustomed  
line of endeavor.  
I got a huge kick out of the Filet department in the mock mall  
correspondence. I suppose, as you suggested, the same "J." probably  
got the Stirling address bungled up, even as they injected humor,  
probably without realizing it, into your letter.  
The weather is hot and humid, - just another way of saying every-  
thing's growing madly were not under water, and thanks to all your  
kindnesses in today's post, my day has been perfect....

6062

6062

On the home front, I saw a new sign, "The Home Front", - this  
sign was placed on the home front, - this sign was placed on the home front,  
Sunday, May 3rd, 1953.

memorandum:  
the enclosure is the thing....  
I can think of few things in this world giving us  
more pleasure than hearing pleasant things said about those  
we love. It has been a week end in which I have experienced  
such pleasure and it pleases me no end to share it with  
you.  
from a line or two in the letter, one gathers that  
the writer has scant knowledge of the confidences exchanged  
by mutual friends and I am in favor of that, what with the  
"tie that binds" seeming the more precious because it is  
realized only by those most intimately concerned. Off hand,  
I should say it might be a good idea to destroy said en-  
closure on reading, but I leave that up to you.  
I dined across the fence to day, after dinner, Celeste  
accompanied me from the dining room to the swing on her  
gallery. She said J. A. usually doesn't return from the  
cattle auction in Alexandria on Wednesday and Friday until  
midnight but on Friday night he surprised her by returning  
between 7 and 8. He said the worst thing in the world had  
happened. He had been driving in a section of town not  
near the auction barn, - nobody mentioned the mill street  
section, - to observe how much the flood waters had inundated  
the neighborhood when a child on a bicycle had dashed  
out from between a couple of houses and his car had pitched  
the child from the bicycle, - which wasn't harmed, - and  
the child's head had been banged on the curb. People  
living in the houses dashed out and a passing car stopped.  
The child was taken to the hospital, the family doctor  
summoned, nurses employed, flowers sent and so on. It was  
said in a report from Alexandria this morning there would  
be no court action. I assume that must be a vast relief in  
view of possible witnesses that might have been called, es-  
pecially if the driver of the car did not chance to be alone.



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On the home front, Sam Peace was again stabbed by his wife, - the widow Brown. This has happened so often in the past that one instinctively feels Sam must have developed an immunity. But he was hauled off to the hospital again, as so often before, and if he survives, I suppose the same old round will repeat itself at some local honkey-tonk, come a Saturday night.

When Carolyn was here, she proposed doing an article for the Ford Magazine in the section called something like "Picture With a Story", in which the flying saucers would be clustered in a halo behind me, the shot taken on the back gallery. This would be a brief article that could be tossed off in an hour but after she had gone, another idea struck me, which I shall pass along to her. It came to me when I scribbled a note to her, accompanying some clippings I had not been able to locate before she left. I took occasion to report to her a couple of pleasant remarks made about her by Mr. Youngblood and one or two others, and in closing that paragraph, I said, in turning to the clippings, -- "so much for you and now to the printed material". But then I paused, for it struck me that she might well expand the plate thing into something more length regarding a variety of efforts undertaken by people now and then wherein the primary motive has not been financial gain. Preservation of gardens, construction of Chapel, historic plates, statues, etc., all of which might make a more lengthy article under such a title as

SO MUCH FOR YOU

by Carolyn Ramsey.

I doubt if the idea will appeal to her but perhaps the title will. Perhaps the title may be used in some other connection, for no matter what the subject matter may be, it seems to me the title is arresting.

I also sent her a statement, although not a direct quot., that had come to me via the telephone the other day, reported by Ora who was passing it along from some lady in Shreveport to whom she had given the Cane River plates. It was to this effect: "If the essence of old Louisiana plantation life and the 18th century enlightenment, lingering on at Melrose today, could be captured and bottled, it would sell in a brisk market for hundreds of dollars an ounce."

After Tuesday night's floods, it seems a little absurd to report the fact that again it is raining.....

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6064

Monday, May 4th, 1953.

Memorandum:

Two inches of rain fell during the night and it has been drizzling, -- off and on, -- ever since. The forecast is for cloudy weather on the morrow.

Naturally, after the 9 inches of a few days back, the planters aren't crying for more rain but it does no harm to the things on our side of the fence, and what with the weather or rather the thermometer maintaining pleasantly high levels, and the soil being naturally rich, tropical growth is unfolding all over the place.

It seems to me there are two or three letters for enclosure although none of them of any particular interest. What the General should have taken time out to pen a few lines from Tulsa is both pleasant and depressing at the same time, -- the later emotion stemming from the fact that what with the African mouse plates and the plants he mentions, having been sent in duplicate so that both senior and junior families might have them, it would seem as though the bags in the respective set-ups might have somehow found time to pen a line and thereby relieve a very busy man of that chore. But I suppose the social squirrels are whirling around madly in their revolving cages and can scarcely be expected to give much thought to the human side of things when the social is of such paramount importance.

What with pilgrims being more or less out of and the rain providing me with an excuse to do desk work, I have spent more time than usual inside today, and among other things I have indulged in the pleasure of looking again through all the photographs coming to hand from you a couple of days back. In glancing again at the reproduction of the design for the two new plates, it strikes me that the Watchitoches one is perhaps the prettiest of those thus far contrived. I seem to echo your own opinion in this matter. I am sending one of the photographs to Millspaugh so it may be placed with the finished numbers, on the assumption delivery will not coincide with the publicity release this week. The photograph will thus provide for possible advance orders, it seems to me.



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I shall pen Carolyn a few lines tonight, suggesting  
she dismiss all thought of the article:

SO MUCH FOR YOU

until she has made another round. It is possible the  
subject matter may not lend itself to an article anyway,  
but if it should seem to be something for consideration  
later, I believe the point to be stressed at its  
opening is the fact that both people and places have  
personalities and that once in a while the person and  
the place, complimenting each other come into conjunction,  
even as do various major and minor heavenly bodies and  
just as the newspaper editors find it worth while to  
report the phenomenon to their readers, so an  
editor of a magazine might find it suitable material to  
report the consequences resulting from the place and  
person conjunction when such a combination tends to  
contribute something or other to ~~the~~ popularity in the  
public mind.

this approach might be a little ponderous for  
ordinary publication but somehow it does seem to contain  
an element of interest that might make it suitable for  
some sheet or other to set forth.

As the Henrys have remarked, Melrose was not actually  
torn down and ploughed under, immediately following the  
Madam's death is because I was here and ready to devote myself  
to its preservation. In the years that have elapsed since  
then, more than one person, passing this way, has caught  
a glimpse of a way of life, thought they saw for a moment  
a confirmation of some half formulated dream of what  
they took to be an ideal way of life, and so the effort  
has been worth while. It would be along such a line, with  
incidental backdrops to give an impression of the physical  
and cultural setting that the article should concern itself, I  
should think, for it is likely there might be any number  
of readers who can never visit Melrose but who can through such  
an article find their faith restore in some vision or other  
that may stand for their best, perhaps their only excuse for  
living in a world in which so many things seem topsy-turvy.

Well, this has certainly been a tiresome conversation,  
and most of it set forth against an endless telephone conversa-  
tion carried on by a youthful swain who prayed me to let  
him communicate with a sweetheart of similar dusky hue, I suppose,  
living in town. I hope the racket of my typewriter didn't  
distract him as much as his chatter did me.....

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Tuesday, May 5th, 1953.

Memorandum:

Naturally enough, I found myself thinking about  
various pictures, painted by artists of varying merit, of  
flood scenes, --from Gustave Moreau's pictorial concept of  
Noah and subsequent and less publicized aquatic disasters.  
And what set me to thinking about these was the presence in all  
such pictures I can remember of rain falling down from on high  
in torrents whereas and in complete juxtaposition to such  
manifestations, the few floods I have ever known in my own  
life have occurred not when it was raining, but days after the  
storm clouds had vanished and the weather become radiant.

Today's sun has been brilliant from dawn to dusk in a  
cloudless sky, --and the marvelously silvered sheet of water,  
stretching from Montrose almost to Melrose, has crept several  
inches closer to the bridgehead, as though intent on spilling  
over into Cane River which it will not do. But the point  
is that, as in 1945, the clouds bringing the rain that produced  
the flood had long since fled before sufficient water had  
gathered itself together on the earth to produce a disaster.  
Somebody or other, and I suppose it was Oscar Wilde, once  
remarked that art isn't intended to mirror life, but rather  
to serve as a pattern for life to emulate. And my  
guess is that Moreau was more artistic than factual when painting  
storm clouds in his Biblical floods, for surely if old Noah's  
tub conformed to marine adventures similar to those in  
later epics, the old thing didn't really find itself actually  
afloat until long after the rains had ceased and the sun  
had illumined the heavens.

But since the local inundation seems to cause no concern to  
anyone on this bank of the river, and since the graduating  
class of the Montgomery High School knew the escape route  
through Bermuda, it could even have morning pilgrims today and  
be glad that the sun so quickly had blotted up the little  
puddles through the gardens yesterday.

One nice thing about the present high water, however, is the fact



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that like the Civil war and other major and minor disasters and disappointments, everything on earth, related or altogether foreign, can be laid at its door, and since several people are screaming for rawn of Matchitoches plates, I can blandly say:

"Oh, --the floods, you know....."

and automatically the responses are identical and the speaker amazingly willing to accept an explanation which apparently has no relation to the truth at all. But I'll make the most of it, since it seems to satisfy the listener completely and so saves me no end of speculation.

First class mail seems to be running about a day behind schedule but it does that about half the time anyway, caused usually by the carelessness of some postal clerk or other who lets them slide by Melrose for Metille, --and since I almost misspelled the names myself, it is evident that anyone less acquainted with the two names might readily do just that.

The Library of Congress book list arrived today and I'll put it under separate cover and send it along for your delectation, although I pray you to toss it into the trash basket if its advent coincides with other demands upon your attention. Just for old time's sake, I suppose we might jot down rroust: Cities of the Plain and Saxon's Children of Strangers, if circumstance permits fiddling with the thing. It goes without saying that if you have any good titles not appearing on the new list, or any old ones that come to mind, you might include them. One thing I should like to know but new shall is what, if any, consideration is given these lists.

When passing by the store today, I heard the negroes giggling and repeating, as they so often do, over and over again the same line that amuses them. Today it ran like this:

"Now there's Kirt Machette, one brother-in-law in the hospital with a broken leg, thrown off his horse, and there's another brother-in-law, Sam, in the hospital, cut up by Mina Brown, and then there's his brother, Jesse, in the hospital with a broken spinal cord, and there's his nephew, smashed up in an automobile and in another hospital, and his sister in another hospital with a cut on the head, --and Kirt.... well, he's doin' reall good."

So much for silly business and so to fold.....

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6068

Wednesday, May 6th, 1953.

Memorandum:

Another hodge-podge day, people, things and weather. The latter got off to a good start with higher temperatures and a cloudless sky, but before first dark had arrived it was cooler and--of all things, raining.

Atte Levy telephoned me this morning, asking where she could secure a plate from the Cane River series. She lives but two or three blocks below Millsbaugh's drug, and it seems odd she has never seen any of them except the plantation one which I gave her when it first appeared.

She said her nephew, living in Houston, had sent her the Carl Victor Little article about Melrose and that Matchitoches was buzzing about it, and didn't I think it was outrageous. I lied, saying I had skimmed through it hurriedly, noted its many errors and had tossed it aside as of no consequence.

The Matchitoches rimes telephoned to say the Matchitoches plate would be reproduced in this week's issue. I had a poor connection and it was difficult to hear what was said about a conversation they had with Carolyn last Friday when she dropped by to secure a copy of the reprint of the anniversary number, but I gath red, --perhaps because I had just ~~spoke~~ spoken with Miss Atte, that there was some discussion about the Little article. The rimes has been receiving each issue of the Houston Press, so must be well up on the Melrose thing.

This afternoon, just as the secretaries arrived, Dr. Rand and Morace appeared. They seemed to be fine but as the supper hour caught up with them before we had had much chance to chat, I didn't get much information fro them. Dr. Rand asked if I had heard about an automobile accident that



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had taken place in Alexandria last Friday. Because Morace was present and because Morace used to play about a bit with a friend of la Montespan's, I thought it better to lie again and profess ignorance. He told me details which I already knew and I registered appropriate surprise and let it go at that.

I was glad to hear that according to a private report from some specialist who recently examined "Ole" Virginia that she was likely to regain her sight. That is all to the good is she can only regain the mental vigor which she had apparently been losing for a year or two before the automobile wreck.

J. H. left this noon for New Orleans where some sort of a library meeting, --perhaps the State Library Association, is meeting. He will return Thursday night within an hour or so from the time he departed. I chanced to be tossing some trash beyond the bamboo hedge and in the cotton fields beyond, I noticed a tractor that was zig-zagging whimsically. It was being more or less piloted by the Dark Duke, as high as a kite. Under such circumstances, he would have done much less damage to the tender new cotton rows if he had been "guiding" Emma.

In the horticultural department, it is pleasant to report that the first zinnia, --a white one from the seed sent by little Miss Lee came into flower today. I may have mentioned I planted some of the seed in pots a little ahead of season, placing the pots in the little building, hard by the side gate for protection against an late frost, and when I got ready to transplant them into the ground, I left two or three plants undisturbed in the pots with a view to stationing them on the gallery, hard by St. Giggins, when they start coming into full flower. Some of the pots have a plant or two of colored zinnias in them, and the white ones will set off the colored ones to vast advantage. I think I planted some of the white ones, --I hope, --around the base of the sun dial but on that point I am not certain, for while the pots were still in the little greenhouse, the weeds got in there, pushed things about and removed the various envelopes attached to the respective pots, and so it is only by guess that I assume the impending bouquets at the base of the sun dial will turn out along a color scheme I had originally intended.

I have had no opportunity to do more than turn through this week's Life, but it was enough to see the section devoted to Africa, and I was entranced by the palm leaf head-gear as you were, I am sure, --the splendid color portrait....

1703

6070

Thursday, May 7th, 1953.

memorandum:

How nice, how nice, how nice.....

For today, in a way, is a bigger and better birthday than anybody could dream about, and I thank you for having made it so your letter was so delicious that it brought an even greater brilliance to the sun which was already dazzling by 9 o'clock when, I some time in two scheduled, I had today's post and a secretary who was skipping school for some reason that was none of my business.

I understand perfectly about the Wallace manuscript and I know you will always feel free to ask for same whenever the opportunity for exploring such documents come to hand. In the mean time, I shall tuck Miss Nellie's letter into the folio and we shall be able to decide about other inserts when time comes for doing something about putting the thing into a more substantial binding, for in reality, we shall simply have to make use of the original leather which has become loose and merely need re-sewing or whatever one does in effecting such matters.

And of course I am enchanted to know you got to see Jane Pickens. I don't recall having heard you mention having caught up with her on the radio, and it is so pleasant to know you like her both on the air and in person, for she somehow has long symbolized an ideal in my mind, --something that doesn't often happen to me in radio personalities. And thanks for telling me about "Mr." Fay Emerson, for I had not known that the former Mrs. Elliott Roosevelt had re-married.

Without mincing matters, I might as well break down slap and confess I found no fortitude as regards holding the package intact until Saturday.

Grandpa and the little Grandpas on tile, Nola Nance on Hastings House, Tender Leaf on little Miss Lee and the Herring Brothers, eventually, I fear, mostly on me.



0503

6071

It's all so delightful, along side your elegant letter and your sweet message tucked in with the Natchez volume, --and the markers for mistletoe and Meade Villa. How surprised, by the way, would Nola wince be if she knew how timely the picture of Meade Villa had come to hand, just when you and I were talking about B. L. C.

As yet, I haven't decided if I shall use Grandpa and the little Grandpas as a wall or a table decoration, but I think I shall employ it both for decors and practicality, having it handy by where I can keep my eye on my little friends, and at the same time put it into use when day is done and reading time rolls round and my jumbo package of tender leaf provides me with stimulant, productive of peace of mind and joy of heart.

I haven't had an opportunity to read any of the text as yet in the Nola wince item but shall get around to it shortly. I am so glad this second volume has appeared for it provides a pictorial records the will last down the ages, even after many of the buildings appearing on the pages have vanished.

As for the juice of the cherries from Denmark, I shall be quite content for ever so long just to contemplate the bottle without breaking the seal, for it symbolizes again your wonderful memory, for one thing, --since it was that which welled up in your mind in recalling some memo or other in which, months back, I probably mentioned the pleasure I had in reading about the Herring brothers and their Danish enterprise of a century back which comes down to this day. But an occasion will come, --perhaps not so much an occasion as a particular state of mind when the seal will be broken and little Miss Lee will be even closer because of the brew that Messrs Herring contrived and she with such grace, passed along.

This is such a happy birthday week, --thanks especially to the orioles with their liquid songs and little Miss Lee with her liquid and pictorial delights.

The enclosures from Marshall is well written even though the news may be on the disappointing side, but perhaps that will inspire greater fortitude and industry on the part of the writer.

Again my warmest thanks for a delicious day, and now, after a splash through a hot bath, I am going to christen the little Grandpas and tender leaf.

8503

6072

*lined up the  
Natchez plates*

Friday, May 8th, 1953.

Memorandum:

I had such a nice birthday party last night, I think I shall have another tonight.

The Herring cherry, its seal unbroken, looked so appealing beneath a vase of giant magnolias, and it was fun to glance in its direction as I sipped my tender leaf, the pot resting on the Grandpa tile, as between times I turned through the Natchez photographs.

I have a few letters to write tonight, after our little chat, but I shall toss them off with gusto, what with the promise of another birthday party to be enjoyed all over again.

I had done a day's work by 9 this morning when I splashed through a quick bath and put on some dry clothing, for last night brought forth a wonderfully heavy dew and I had only to step out at dawn to be drenched. And the telephone hastened my bath, too, for it rang persistently until I arose from my sea shell and choked the thing. It was Millsbaugh's drug, saying the morning paper, carrying a likeness of the town of Natchitoches plate, had apparently been delivered early and that three or four telephone calls had inquired when the new plate would be available. I told Millsbaugh I hadn't the least idea, but this evening the shipment arrived which ought to please the Millsbaugh drug. I shall bundle up some sort of a package before the postman makes his rounds on the morrow so a package may go forward at the same time this letter leaves, for little Miss Lee. Nora's shipment of card board for individual plates will stand me in good stead in the days ahead, but I shall place your shipment in something that will afford more protection for its travels up your way, and as packing material is momentarily scarce, you will, I trust, forgive the crumby appearance of whatever is made up of. I shall enclose nothing in the package save the china, and that I shall put in some kind of a paper sack so that you may extract the contents and toss the box into the nearest trashcan. I am under the impression the coloring is a little pale but perhaps the suggestion of fading lends the impression of the ante bellum to the thing. So let me have your own



6073

candid impression so I may guided when writing to Rock Hall to make acknowledgement of the shipment, which I shall delay for a while, what with high water providing as good an alibi for making acknowledgement of receipt as well as delay on the part of the carrier.

I have no doubt the Matchitoches times will come to hand in Saturday's post, and if so, I shall put a copy in the mail for you on Monday.

A little after 9 this morning, when I dropped by across the frency for a cup of coffee, Celeste handed me a bottle of red wine, --one of that type that is done up with much straw of varyi colors at the bottom, and sporting a straw cork. She said J. A. had brought it for me from New Orleans on his return from the meeting of the library board or whatever in New Orleans. J. A. never brought me anything from New Orleans before and what with the morrow being what it is on the calendar, I half assumed the gift had been purchased on Celeste's suggestion.

I chanced to see J. M. in mid afternoon, - the first time in three days. He said:

"Oh, by the way, that lady in Alexandria sent you a bottle of wine."

The mistress purchases and the wife presents....Ho...hum.....

There were two or three telephone calls today from Natchitoches, including one from Carmen Breazeale. The point in each communication was to voice individual resentment of the Earl Victor Little article which seems to be making the rounds at a great rate. (interruption) -- somebody wanted to borrow show fare.....

I think I was talking about telephone calls. Resentment seems to be the common theme, resentment against the author but more especially against James Aswell. I feel indifference to the whole business as they, without knowing it, voice my own opinion that there is something wrong with Mr. Aswell in not feeling any sense of responsibility for the performance of his guest whom people received with kindness, both as a matter of course to any stranger but doubly so in respect to a parish neighbor who brought the man to us in fairness to the Aswells. I must say they really don't seem to realize they have broken any rules, --or that their guest has. But I think they will probably experience a degree of polite reserve when next they pilot a visitor to the homes of people living in the region.

but now to the mail and after that the tender leaf...

6074

Sunday, May 10th, 1953.

memorandum: such a pleasant week end, -- people, weather and things, and I'm hoping you found a measure of the same in your immediate vicinity. There were annoyances, too, but they were quite secondary; as for example, a letter from Mrs. Stirling announcing that the plates had arrived, along with an invoice from the manufacturer. It would appear that somebody, -- perhaps "J" of the Pilot episode, must be gumming up the works a bit at Rock Hall. An invoice, carrying the net prices, is always a grave business error when sent to the customer's customer. I shall air mail Rock Hall on this point.

And then there was the information from Mrs. Stirling that it has been decided by the Park Commission that the blinds, -- she is pleased always to call them jalouses, that once graced the galleries at Oakley, are likely to be restored, and she said "jalouses" cannot be added to the galleries of the Oakley appears in the plate. The answer to this is on the negative side for a flock of reasons, and even skipping manufacturing reasons, it seems enough to consider what a box like thing in a sketch, Oakley would emerge, if the whole front of the building were boxed in with blinds.

And, as though to further to emphasize the number of things that can go wrong in some ill starred account, I, myself, fail to find in my file the two cards and addresses which Mrs. Stirling sent to me weeks back with a view to having me post plates on her behalf from this point, as soon as the Audubon-Oakley item came to hand. I have already secured a little over a half of the money invested in this venture, and I shall continue cultivating the project until the account is brought into balance. After which, I shall relax my grip a little, -- and probably by then, the project will have drifted into calmer waters, and, I hope, suggest smoother sailing than has been any where in evidence since its inception.



6075

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I was mildly surprised this morning when Mrs. Holloman and her sister, Mrs. Harding, appeared on my gallery. I think the sisters have not been on friendly terms for years, possibly 20 years, and perhaps on the day that Ethel Granger, --then married to young Harding, awoke to discover that her sister, Sue Granger, had married Mr. Harding, senior, papa of her husband, thus elevating herself (Sue) from her status of sister to Ethel and aunt of her child, to a position of mother-in-law to her sister, Ethel, and grandmother of Ethel's child. A year or two ago, Ethel told me she had never seen the Harding camp here on the river, but this morning it appeared that Sue had entertained Ethel over night here on the river.

Mr. and Mrs. Grady Irwin of the college had been here before Mrs. Holloman, et al, arrived, and had been discussing the Wailes report and manuscript with Mr. Irwin who was fascinated by it. And so, when Mrs. Holloman arrived, I trotted the thing out again and suggested an article for the Picayune might be in order. Naturally, Mrs. Holloman never heard of B. L. U. Wailes, but I can dictate an article to her that she can put in order, introducing the direct quotations required, and so perhaps the Gulf States area will have an opportunity to learn something about B. L. U. which would do no reader a y harm, and might delight people, even as it did us, when the Snyder volume appeared. I shall of course inquire of Mrs. Brandon regarding her reaction to such an article and shall send it to her for her approval before transmitting it to the Picayune.

Celeste gave me a pair of fancy pajamas for my birthday, explaining that J. A. doesn't care for the short pants that characterize the pair being presented, and further pointing out that while she realized I don't wear pajamas, I ought to and should not hord the present pair or the three previous pairs she has presented on previous birthdays and Christmases. It is so good to get all these finer points straightened out and as I never have believed in hording clothes, I think there is scant danger of these being left to fade away on the shelf.

Juanita must have heard, --perhaps from across the fence, that it was natal day on Saturday, and at dinner a hand contrived cake appeared for dessert, --delicious withal, and indicative of her multiple kindness. And so runs out a week end, inaugurated so splendidly by little Miss Lee earlier in the week and the one person deserving the biggest star in her crown for bringing forth so much happiness.....

6076

6076

Monday, May 11th, 1953.  
The summer weather continues in spite of the cloudiness, and with the water beginning to drain from the Montrose lane area, nobody is hoping for rain. Tonight's low is scheduled for 74, which means everything green will be growing madly from dusk till dawn.

I think I didn't mention in yesterday's memo that as I was saying goodbye last evening to Mr. and Mrs. Irwin, there were some ladies of color awaiting me at the gate. When I got around to them, one introduced herself as the sister of Alton Johnson, and as having been here once with her wood carving brother. There were four or five people with her, some about her age or perhaps around 20, and one or two more mature ones, perhaps 50-ish. There was among them one woman who gave the impression of being white. She was named Thompson or some such and although living in Wichita, Kansas, had read the piece about Melrose in the Times, and having at one time been a resident of this region, had hoped to meet the writer of the article. This morning, I learned from Juanita that said woman is her aunt, being her mama's sister, and when I expressed surprise at her light pigmentation, Juanita, who is black, said:

"Well, you know how it was in the old days, all kinds of folks changing about. My mama is the same color as me but Auntie, she must have had some of the change-up business in her." It was mildly amusing that we were half through our vaguely hurried tour as night was sitting in on us that La Thompson brought up for a second time the matter of meeting the writer of the Times article about Melrose, and then it was that I plead guilty and everyone else in the party tittered and giggled, for only the Kansas number seemed to know that the contact had already been established.  
Tonight I was impressed by how far I got out of touch with things, especially over the week ends, --and possibly longer, for it was tonight, on hearing the Morrow news broadcast,



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6077

that I elevated my ears to especial attention when Mr. Morrow referred several times to Sir Winston Churchill. That's all I know about the new member of the peerage, but from the repetition of the title, I assume a title has been conferred. It seems odd that I should have heard a reference to the honor before, although I haven't the vaguest notion just how new it is. Years ago I heard some speculation as to whether he would be made a Duke but it was concluded at the time that since a dukedom would remove him from his seat in the Commons, it was thought likely he would duck such an honor, at least until he had definitely decided to take a less active part in party politics. I expect few people ever forego such urges for power, and so it wouldn't be surprising if Mr. Churchill never got around to wear the strawberry leaves.

The volume V of his memoirs came to hand on Saturday and I have dipped into them a little. 1943 seems to be the year on which they begin in this volume, and the recording, as in previous volumes, is done by some man whose voice is so much like the Prime Minister's that unless I stop to consider the matter, I instinctively feel it is the aut or speaking.

I telephoned the health center today, asking for a list of the names and the addresses of every child, colored and white, born to parents resident inatchitoches Parish, as of May 8th, 1953. As you have undoubtedly already anticipated, I have in mind presenting each child with a plate of the town ofatchit ches, as the plates were born, --at least were delivered and released for distribution inatchitoches on that date. It will be nice for the child in the years ahead and some will treasure them as companion pieces to their birth certificates. It goes without saying that I shall write a letter to go with each gift. I am under the impression about 50,000 people live in the parish, but I haven't the last idea what the daily birth rate may be, but if it isn't too vast, the thing can be accomplished with ease, I believe.

Tomorrow morning the office handling public relations for all the electrical service in the state of Louisiana is coming for a conference. My thought is the weekly papers carrying public utility services should dramatize their product by doing articles about the regions saved and should reproduce pictorial maps, save the Cane River country, - don't you think so.....

6078

6078

Tuesday, May 12th, 1953.

Memorandum,

How nice to find your Wednesday, May 6th, letter, together with the Brandon transcripts in this morning's post.

And how kind of you to have struggled through the deciphering required, and how generous of you to offer to transcribe the other letter, a portion of which you have already thus rendered into typed form. I shall enclose the original herewith and suggest you keep all the originals. We can bind the transcript, if and when we get around to binding.

Until you mentioned it, I hadn't realized that Manhattan, even as Melrose, has been receiving ample supplies of moisture of late. Yesterday, according to a radio report, Manhattan was sizzling under a 95 degree heat which must have been 125 in the street.

This morning I heard a scrambled news broadcast about a flock of people being killed by a tornado last night in Waco. Naturally my mind turned toward Helen. Tonight we are slated to have a tornado, apparently a little to the North of us, --I caught the word, Monroe, in the crackle and snap of the static. I write at 9:15 and it is pouring. Frequent flashes of lightning reveal the pecan trees bending mightily under the gale. I hope the breeze will be spread far enough this way so that it will have lost its intensity in the Monroe area.

But today, except for the dust bowl gauze that persists, was lovely enough and I got quite a few pilgrims as a result.

One group consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Wilkinson of New Orleans and a young lady. Mr. W. is a descendant of that oldascal, General James Wilkinson of Burr Conspiracy fame, --the same gent who, while General of the Army, was receiving top pay in the U.S. military household and, as subsequent records have shown, was receiving pensions from the Spanish Government whose forces she was a posed to be fighting.

But in spite of his outrageous ancestor, Mr. Wilkinson is.....



8503

6079

very nice, as is his wife. They were returning from Taos, New Mexico where they had been on a vacation. They had read about the Cane River plates in the Ricayune, way back yonder and learned in Taos that they were obtainable at Melrose. I should like to know more about that. Anyway, with the Audubon-Wakley thing in shallow water and invoices coming due shortly, it was altogether pleasant when Mr. Wilkinson asked if they might secure five sets of the plates in the Cane River series. With Rock Hall just in the offing, that really made a very pleasant transaction.

The afternoon was a shambles, with one set of people arriving before the preceeding group had departed. A Board meeting of the Valley Electric this morning, called unexpectedly, required the presence of people I had anticipated arriving here at 10 o'clock. They arrived at 2. And they wanted scads of photographs and endless amounts of stories about the Cane River country. But it was too hot to bother about more than generalities and furthermore, it struck me that might consult the article in The Times for whatever they required. I have no idea what they propose doing with so many pictures, - exteriors and interiors but I assume that some of the shots will appear in N. E. A. publications or some such. I am quite sure another week will see an endless mail from the same quarter, asking for this or that detail which they failed to assimilate during their initial visit.

Next week's Natchitoches Enterprise will carry in its special feature column, written by Carmen Brazeele, calling attention to the Natchitoches Parish parents of children born on May 8th, 1953, that a town of Natchitoches plate is being given to every child born on May 8th, - the date of the release of the commemorative plate released for the first time on May 8th. The health center advised me that while all births in the Parish are supposedly registered promptly, there are occasions when such registrations are delayed in such instances as where the child is born in a hospital, -- say, Alexandria or Shreveport, and especially in the case of babies brought into this world under the auspices of the midwife, and this is especially so in the more remote regions of the Parish itself where recording of the births are delayed for indefinite periods, sometimes, in fact, not at all.

It is calculated that this notice in the press will impell the prompt recording of many such births and incidentally, as Carmen remarked on hearing the news, a flock of potential purchasers of plates will be introducing the subject generally in their table conversation.

Well, so things turn and now I must lay hands on the Brandon letter, and tucking it in with this memo, bless you again for your kindness in taking up this matter.....

1803

6080

Wednesday, May 13th, 1953.

Memorandum:  
I shall mark this envelope with a couple of pencil strokes since my memo of yesterday is sitting on the holding shelf because the assistant post rider, --a lady,-- got so frisky this morning as to arrive and depart an hour ahead of schedule.

Last night's breeze reached tornado proportions in this region, especially in the Gollax area where Cane River flows into Red, where it blew down a Methodist church in which about 50 colored people were holding a service. Only one person, a 70 year old blind woman, was killed, but I'll bet the big blow put the fear of God or the Devil into the souls of the other worshippers.

Locally it knocked off a few big limbs from the pecan trees, blew down some althias (Rose of Sharon) and buckled up some of my prize banana stalks which I had to cut down, and while the latter will take a heavy toll on my hopes for an impressive banana crop this season, we are certainly lucky nothing more occurred, what with so much racket going on all around.

I ventured across the Montrose highway today, driving for a couple of miles with water stretching as far as the eye can see on each side of the highway, --the latter itself being still under a few inches of water at various stretches. I went down to Derry to get the two packages Dora had sent me for my birthday. It was certainly most kind of Dora to send me such elegant clothing -- a bright blue suit, a fine hat, a bill fold, a oiled silk raincoat, underwear and shirts without end, a belt, neckties and the Lord know what all. Frankly there is a super-abundance and as I seldom find myself in "Sunday" clothes, the bright blue suit and hat will be items I shall not wear out during a single season. I shudder at the thought of the mere parcel post charges, let alone the investment in raiment, for Derry wanted a dollar in postage just to send the packages from Derry to Melrose. The jaunt from Derry ought to be bankrupting, I should think.



0803

6081

I talked with the manager of the radio station today. He seems very cooperative and says he will see to it that an announcement regarding the town of Natchitoches plate gift for all those born on May 8th, 1953, will be aired both on news broadcasts and on a program that must be along lines of the Soap Operas, --something having to do with birthdays. From this airing of the business, news ought to get through to remoter sections of the parish and to parents whose children were delivered in hospitals outside Natchitoches parish on the 8th, and so the contact with eligible birthday recipients should be fairly well canvassed.

In view of the publicity accorded the town of Natchitoches plate by last week's Times, I naturally got a great kick out of it when Mr. Planchard, the station manager, asked about the nature of the gift being contemplated to the children born on the 8th, for he declared he had never heard of the town of Natchitoches plate or any of the others in the Cane River series. I don't know, but it would seem safe to surmise that at least one radio station manager doesn't waste any time reading local newspapers. Perhaps, were he to do so, he would feel himself unfaithful to the radio medium for dispensing with the next few days, the Parish Health Center will forward me a list of the names of the children born on the 8th, and I shall write a letter to each one individually and send it along with the gift. This will probably fill some of the parents, --the ones who don't chance to know their alphabet, with vast puzzlement. Others will perhaps want to save the letter to go with the plate so the child may have it as a souvenir from the year of his birth, and perhaps one or two may even survive, both with plate and child, until the latter has attained the half century mark or so, and for the possessor, that will probably make odd rading along about 2053. But if someone had given little Miss Lee such a combination on the day she made her bow into the world, I have a feeling she would be likely to retain it as a keep sake.

With last night's radio reception so impossible, I turned to my reading machine and explored a few pages in the fifth volume of the Churchill memoirs, wherein he expresses vast disappointment at the Eisenhower refusal during the Italian campaign to lend a bit of assistance to the English then thinking of capturing the island of Rhodes, --interesting reading in view of today's position of both gentlemen.

Carolyn is supposed to bring J. M. the cotton material on Saturday. Hope the week end here isn't too tempestuous.....

0803

6082

Thursday, May 14th, 1953.

Memorandum: Carol Lee, May 14, 1953. I received your letter of the 11th and was glad to learn by the morning mail of your delicious weekend and may I race on to say how much I treasure every word you had to tell me about the current scene as it unfolds about you. I am glad to hear that you are again up to your hips in entertaining, but that heaven for Saturday and perhaps by then another breathing spell will develop, I hope. For the millionth time, I was amazed at the brightness of your eye for details, as indicated by your reference to the vegetation appearing in Rudolph's snapshot. I hadn't noticed that particular print until you called my attention to it. It is true that out of whimsy I did do a bit of gardening to the end that a leafy covering developed to afford a pleasant vista and it is of course of sufficient amplitude for even a tall person to pass through it conveniently. I hope the botanical garden was up to expectation and that you found a measure of peace in a bountiful floral setting.

A brief message from Robina signifies her intention to pass this way on Sunday afternoon, -- the 24th, with Miss Nellie (Mrs. Megan) and some other friend. This is the time I am supposed to dictate the wailers article for the Ricayune to Mrs. Holloman. I shall not block off either this far ahead, for something may develop that will cause one or the other of them to alter their plans. At the same time, I want to see Robina, and at the same time, I should like to toss off the wailers article, too. As much as both ladies go to business, it is probably difficult for them to arrange Melrose trips as readily as they would like. I recall correctly Carolyn is supposed to come here on the 16th. I haven't the slightest idea if she plans to stay a few days, but I assume she may. In the mean time, the Kleisers speak of passing this way, and I am holding the thought things will work out so that all these comings and goings may dove tail and not "mash", -- as local friends of color describe such potentials.



6083

It was so good of you to acquaint me with particulars regarding the Library of Congress listings. Those you mentioned as possibilities sound most promising. As I understand it, the list includes a so-called enumeration of titles suggested by users of the talking books. If so, and since I am under the impression they never list the Saxon-Roust titles, I think I shall write the Library a sizzling letter after the next communication or listing is forth-coming, saying in effect that I have long felt that all the transactions of this nature constituted nothing more than shadow boxing and that no matter how often Reader suggests the same titles, --works of outstanding merit, they never bother to include these suggestions in their communications, and as it were, "What the hell".

You refer to the reachwangler book about Rousseau as being of dubious appeal. So I understand that it is already out and that reviews have given it a going over, or, perhaps you have seen the item. I like the period so much, I suppose I might enjoy almost anything in such a setting even though Herr Rousseau, as a character, never excited my interest. After a million years, I recall A. Dumas, pere, used Rousseau a little in one of his Marie Antoinette series or novels, -- perhaps it was la Comtesse de Charny Chevalier de la Maison Rouge or some such, but I haven't thought of those novels since I was a child and when I read them, Jean Jacques was probably pretty nebular in my mind.

I got around to read a couple of more pages from volume v of the Churchill opus last night and I must say I was astonished to learn of the tremendous differences of opinion regarding war policies and strategy existing between Churchill, and one gathers, Eisenhower, although the author very adroitly side-steps precise reference to individuals, leaving one to assume that the opposition to Churchillian ideas might have been F. D. R.'s or Eisenhower's as voiced by F. D. R.

Death tolls continue to mount in the waco tornado, -- 104 was the number i last heard. My impulse is to write Helen but i assume dozens of other people are responding to such an impulse and i suppose carolyn will have talked with her and will have a i the news when she comes on Saturday.

Again my blessings on little miss Lee for such a delicious day.....

6084

I had sent in a few to the local emporium. Mr. Millegan chatted with me a few minutes after the customer had left. He said people are beginning to become interested in the new line. He said everyone that inquired were interested in it. He said they all seemed to say off from an old number like 5. He wanted to know if I contemplated doing another in the same river series. I told him I was thinking about the Johns boat. He thought that would turn the trick.

Memorandum:

The rains continue, - nothing torrential but merely unending dizzles. The Montrose lane is again submerged with a vast sheet of water spreading in a rectangular area approximately 2 by 3 miles. It's all very entrancing to look at but not especially conducive to cotton culture, I reckon. Fortunately for Melrose, its cotton fields for the most part are on high ground and aren't much affected. I suppose there will be a big drop this year, basing my assumption on the fact that at this embryonic state, the pecans promise an abundance, and usually, it seems, cotton gives forth a mighty poundage when the pecan harvest is plentiful. But who knows it goes without saying that a dozen circumstances, "excusing" even a tornado or two, might vastly alter the May promise before the November harvest has been secured.

It seemed odd to find myself in town this morning, but I went. Celeste drove me in as I had two or three little things to attend to, - the radio program, the newspapers, etc., none of which really required my presence but all of which were settled more readily by personal contacts.

At the Chamber of Commerce building, I found the cane River plates much in evidence. Carmen Brazale, the secretary, said there were frequently people who wanted to purchase them but were prevented from doing so because they could not find parking place in the vicinity of Millspaugh Drug and often it has happened that people passing through town, after having seen the region, have wanted one of the other of the plates but had not the time to go shopping for them. She said she would be so happy if it could be arranged..... and so it can, I think.

later I dropped in at Millsbaugh Drug and was introduced to some man from Shreveport who had noticed the plates in the window and had just purchased an Audubon Wakley one. I didn't suppose anybody outside of Feliciana would be interested in them, but was glad



6085

I had sent in a few to the local emporium. Mr. Millspaugh chatted with me a few minutes after the customer had left. He said people are beginning to become "set conscious", and while everyone thus incolined were interested in 4, 6 or 8, they all seemed to shy off from an odd number like 5. He wanted to know if I contemplated doing another in the Cane River series. I told him I was thinking about the Joyous Coast. He thought that would turn the trick.

I have decided to write a letter to go with each plate to the various children born of Natchitoches parish on May 8th, 1953, so that it will run something like this:

Happy Birthday.....

I have been told that you have been born on May 8th, 1953, ~~xxxxxx~~  
On the same day there was born in Matchitoché's a plate with  
which records a small part of the long history of this old town.  
Since you and the plate have the same birthday, I am sending  
you one as a present.  
Maybe you would like to try to keep it during your whole life and  
pass it on to another baby, perhaps, your own.

In any case, I wish you a long and happy life."

According to the health center, the final recordings of May 8th bits will probably be in by the end of the next couple of weeks, and so you will have time to advise me if you think a note as outlined above is too long or too short or should be otherwise contrived. I shall appreciate your comment, especially if it be adverse, so I may rig the thing up to better advantage.

I was surprised this evening when Sam Pece appeared at my door. He is just back from the hospital and personifies almost any artist's concept of an ambulating corpse. Moseying about in the rain wouldn't be the best method toward recuperation, I should imagine, but that is merely one man's opinion. --and apparently not Sam's.

I suppose Carolyn will put in an appearance this week end, regardless of the rain. I understand her desire to make it because of J. H.'s promise to pass her cotton material along to the powers meeting in Memphis this coming week. If it rains, I shall be able to expand some of the main items in the Jane River article and so time will not be lost. I am glad it isn't until next week that Mrs. Holloman comes for the Wailes dictation. I have re-read your yesterday letter this evening and call down blessings on y ur head for having made my impending week end so happy....

6086

Sunday, May 17th, 1953.

Memorandum: Last night was a good one to sleep. The thermometer was about 70 and three and a half inches of rain slanted down from first dark until measuring time at 5:40.

if anywhere on Sunday mornings, I usually get the Columbia news cast at 7. I was puzzled when the announcer said the whole nation, "except the deep south" was headed for a rainy sabbath, but in the "deep south" only sunshine would obtain. Frankly, I no idea as to where precisely the "deep south" might be but I had always supposed Louisiana might be a part of it. But I must be wrong, for it has continued pouring, - off and on, - all day.

in the midst of one particularly heavy downpour, I was gently  
staken aback,--it was dinner time and I was dining across  
the fence, when Celeste, in a petulant voice, dominated by  
annoyance: it thence: in the upper reaches of red: I  
return have a measure of high water: been heavy: I  
said: "Well, there's simply isn't any water." I

From where I sat there seemed to be so much of it that it was only after a second's thought that I realized the entire electrical system for miles had been knocked out. I recommended she set out a bucket which would be filled in a jiffy.

I tried hearing invitation to Lanning before the current was out, but found it pretty elusive; what with thunder rolling endlessly and static that out-Korea-ed Korea. I got an idea from what little I heard that I should like to read Mr. Meredith's The Logist, at the conclusion of the program there was a terrific explosion of static so I never did hear the sentence which told what next week's discussion would be about.

It was learned at dinner that Patch had recovered from the mumps. I hadn't known that he had them, so the recovery was no great surprise. The matter came up because his mother, Eugenia, telephoned at the dinner hour from Houston to inquire what the news was from - at night be. What a strange mother and so business that has always been.



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As for the expected week end, it turned out rather different, so far as Carolyn was concerned. She telephoned Saturday, saying that as the skies looked uncertain, she would not come down until today. Well, she hit that slap in the nose, since she finally arrived about 8 tonight, having encountered no end of roads under water in the Natchitoches area.

Carolyn intends returning to Marshall in the morning if the roads are passable. I hadn't really sensed it that she was making this week end trip exclusively for handing J. H. an outline for him to give to the Public Relations head of the Cotton Council, meeting in Memphis on Thursday of this week. In view of rising water and the need for giving attention to cattle, now pastured in lands subject to inundation, J. H. will probably not attend the Memphis meeting.

But immediate plans are of course dependent on the situation, especially the amount of water which has fallen in the upper reaches of Red River. If those rains have been heavy, we shall probably have a measure of high water, if not, we shall probably have no difficulty with Red River and will merely be concerned with excesses in the Cane River basin.

As for Carolyn, she is bubbling over with plans for television. She has some connection with a Houston concern, headed by a man formerly in the State Department. He is selling material to United Artists for television programs.

Carolyn is under the impression I know something about gardening and that beginning with Melrose we could do a photographic thing of interest and supply a text that would be unusual in the television field. The idea is to prepare 13 programs,-- both text and movies, which sounds like of investment in time and effort, but there's the idea and I doubt if it ever comes to anything, although through her connections, it may.

In the mean time, I am holding to the article lines rather than the television and for some of these projected pieces, the Cane River country and some of its smaller entities ought to be brought into saleable condition, I think. Of course, I am inclined to gather up what crumbs are available first before getting bogged down on more elaborate but elusive plans. Besides, I suppose I want to tuck in a few plate articles for national magazines, showing a bias on my part. But of these and other points I shall speak in subsequent letters. It is after midnight and I must fold for the moment. I hope your day has been filled with opportunities for relaxation and rest and comparatively d

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1 P.M.

Monday, May 18th, 1953.

#### Memorandum:

It is pleasant to be able to report that everything at Arenbourg and Yucca is secure.

It seems a little ridiculous to report that outside it is pouring.

The general situation is this:

Only about a half inch of rain fell in the region above Grand Booe yesterday, so Red River, although high, is not likely to spill over into Cane and within three or four days, Cane will begin draining off, --if it doesn't rain too much more.

The cement highway south from Natchitoches begins going under water about 2 miles below the city and with only one or two island exceptions, the cement continues under water for perhaps 10 or 15 miles, through Bayou Natchez, Montrose to Derry. Cloutierville has evacuated 150 families from low sections. The railroad tracks are under water but I know not if the trains can push through or not. At the moment, Bayou Natchez is isolated, making it impossible for the mail carriers to move from their office. There was no in-coming or out-going mail today. It is expected there will be a restoration of service on the morrow.

We continue to enjoy the escape route, following along the river road into Natchitoches. One can also go South by river road and join the cement highway just below Derry. All traffic from New Orleans to Shreveport or where ever, using the west bank of Red River, must pass by here, which increases the traffic tremendously. Sand bags have been placed about the spillway hard by where the Dar Duke lived, holding that road intact, but if that doesn't hold, we shall be cut off from communication by with everything South from here. The road to town, however, is sufficiently secure, however, to make it quite a casual thing for Celeste and Madam Regard to keep an appointment in town during the afternoon.

in 1952, central Louisiana between January and May



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had 8 inches of rain. For the same period this year it has had .47 and a half.

Cattle were moved from Little River low lands to Montrose high lands today. It seems Melrose owns vast acreages over Montrose way, too. How they get the cattle there, I don't know, but I suppose they perhaps transport them by truck around by town, but how they get to the Montrose hills, I know not.

I think none of Melrose cotton has been effected by water, other than the excessive rainfall, meaning that none of it is actually standing in water or submerged, as are the plantations across the river not owned by Melrose. Another thing to be considered is the fact that pecan trees like moisture at this season, and as the trees already suggest a bumper crop, they ought to be loving this deluge.

Carolyn got off about 10 this morning. Before leaving she had a conference with J. H. about a book for the Cotton Council and seemed glad she made her trip down here.

I think Carolyn has some good ideas and she certainly has some desirable connections. My problem is to hold her in line long enough to bring one idea into flower before she flies off to cultivate a half dozen other buds.

I was delighted to learn from her that she had talked with Helen shortly after the Waco disaster and that Helen came through the ordeal without any difficulties. Helen had endless inquiries by telephone, wire and cable from all over and I am glad I restrained my impulse to write until a measure of normalcy was restored to her correspondence efforts. I shall write her tonight.

Between shower this afternoon, I tried enlightening out some of the banana plants, recently blown down and trimming up some of the sagging Gardener's Garter. But my operations came to a sudden halt when it suddenly struck me I had developed "auntsies in the pantsies". I reckon so much moisture must have induced the inhabitants of some subterranean ant center to move to the surface, which would have been alright, so far as I was concerned, if they had remained there, but when I suddenly felt a billion pin pricks moving from my ankles upward, I figured it was my move to divest myself of raiment and hop into a puddle, which I did, and used that as an excuse to knock off for the day. Now to my letters. But I should apologize for so much water talk but I did want you to know precisely the situation, which, although damp-ish, is otherwise well in hand.....

1803

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St.  
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Tuesday, May 19th, 1953.

Memorandum:

We are promised we shall have no mail before Monday. The postal inspectors inspected the region yesterday and today, and came up with the decision that mails will be better managed if cut off in centers some distance from here, -- Alexandria and Shreveport, I suppose. As I understand it, the pouches will be held there, and forwarded when the railroads resume operation. This is probably good sense for people living in tent cities, but for those of us on the only highway open to through traffic, it does seem to me it would simplify things for me if they delivered at least the 1st class mail to the post offices on the direct north-south line of communication to such post offices as are situated on same. But I suppose this would involve unimaginable confusions whose nature is beyond my powers to picture.

Be that as it may, the edict has been issued and there will be no mail in this area for the next four days. We that is to say, the secretaries and I will need all the help the Lord can give us when the accumulation rolls in.

I suppose pilgrims from afar may be discouraged from coming into this area but, oddly enough, pilgrims living with 100 miles are beginning to increase in impressive numbers, - many of them impelled by curiosity, I suppose, to journey into the cane river country to observe the miseries resulting from the high water, and thus, finding themselves not too far from Melrose, decide they will make the most of the outing by way of tucking in a tour.

Today's weather has been cloudless, the sun radiant, the promise for cloudless skies straight ahead.

This afternoon came Father Lyons, the gay young priest appointed to take over Father Becker's parish at Cloutiersville. His mother and sister from New York were with him. I liked them all and they apparently liked what they had to see. The ladies are returning home on the morrow. Father Lyons asked if he might come back to see me again real soon. He might.



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0003

And half an hour after the cat o'lie spiritual leader had departed, the Reverend Webb, Baptist man of God in Cloutierville, appeared to make his howdies. So eboby told me months ago he had left Cloutierville but it seems he had merely gone to Baton Rouge to have a prolonged operation, to be followed by a more painful duty, - burying his father. He puts me in mind of Audolph and is quite pleasant and nothing by garb or manner suggestive of the pulpit. I get the impression he may eventuall break through the chrysolis of what was probably poverty and narrowness of the first 23 years of his life, which is up to now, and that he may emerge into a broader shpere as time runs along.

Carmen Breazeale, Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, telephoned me this morning. She has something to do with Red Cross and worked until midnight attending to local needs. I had asked Carolyn to drop some porcelain at the Chamber of Commerce on her way through town yesterday, and la Breazeale wanted to thank me for such a pleasant contact as had been here. In a way I was not surprised when she said that Carolyn had told her that when she arrived in Shreveport on her way home to Marshall on Monday afternoon, she would contact Red Cross headquarters there and volunteer her photographic services, if, as happens sometimes, the organization wishes a photographic record from the air of the inundations. I believe Carolyn recorded the St. Louis flood areas a while back. This would be a neat trick if properly turned, for the same camera that recorded the disaster for the Red Cross files might well click twice and so provide interesting pictorial data for the same river a ticle.

Air planes have been passing low over the gardens all day and I assume some of them at least have been on photographic missions. For all I know, one of them may have had Carolyn aboard. When she left yesterday morning, she promised to write me on Monday night, giving me an account of her adventures after leaving here, but as there will be no mail before Monday which is May 25th or thereabout I shall not have any news as to what actually did or did not happen.

The town of Watchitoches is also to be without mail for four days, and this ought to lead to endless confusion. I should imagine, -- appointments, invitations, reservations and so on. The weather forecast is for clear skies straight ahead and apparently Red River is not going to spill over into cane, so for all of us in this region, it is just a question of playing patience and letting the waters subside. I'll miss the mail but what a big time I shall have next week, making up for lost time.....

0003

6092

Wednesday, May 20th, 1953.

Memorandum:

Another day of brilliant sunshine, and although the Weather Bureau suspects rain for the morrow, it hazards the opinion the quantity will not be great and therefore have little effect on the present situation of the rivers.

And I got just that far when the telephone rang. It was Monck's Corner, - Kay calling for a little chat and then la Storm having an equal go at things. They as busy at gardening and both of them seem to be fine. They had heard on the radio that Watchitoches parish was having water problems and wanted to inquire about how we all were at this bend of the river. There was nothing more than small talk, a discussion on what the best time is for cutting bamboo, etc., etc. The voices were very clear. It must be the crappist fathers on their party line weren't listening, -- too busy screaming at each other, perhaps, to get near a telephone. Those crappists.....

All north south traffic between New Orleans and Shreveport goes by here now. There is quite a rumble at 15 or 20 minute intervals, the racket being made by by huge trucks transporting cattle to the Shreveport area. Many of the neighboring plantations are sending several hundred head each up yonder. Of course transportation on live stock for such a hundred mile jaunt runs into money, perhaps 15 dollars for the round trip, plus pastureage during the holiday for the live stock. J. N. says he doesn't understand why some local planters are going in for this solution of their high water problem in the cattle section, since some of them, as for example, the people owning the Perry plantation, have endless highland which is way out of the water's way and where tender foliage of the brush would almost sustain the animals for whom hay could be readily obtainable if the green stuff ran low. It is estimated the local pastures will be out of water in about 2 to 3 weeks. Be that as it may, the trucks containing live stock continue rumbling by, all day and all night.



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It is said the Postal inspectors have expressed the opinion that there may be a trickle of 1st class mail into the stricken area within the next day or two. Belatedly the 1953 unfolding of the cape jessamine begins. The grandiflora magnolias were on schedule, as of April 12th this year and I am puzzled that the gardenia section trailed so far behind. Moisture inclines to hasten the blossoming of gardenias, of course, and I cannot imagine a Spring run of weather that has given them greater inducement, but laggarly they have been regardless.

It goes without saying that I have them scattered all over my boudoir and living room and the vase of them along side my typewriter nods sedately at each tap of the keys. But I must say that the one which appears to greatest advantage is situated in Juanita's perruque. I think I have mentioned that Juanita is the coloring and general size of Zelma,-- that gently-buxom lady whom we encountered on the Bermuda road when we were marching to Arenbourg one day. The darkness of the skin, the blackness of the hair seems to make the gardenia department when displayed at such a vantage point, seem twice as snowy and striking. Somehow the gardenia or any of its variations, stands as a symbol of something possessed by the negro race which strikes me as a salient difference between it and the white race as I have known it, for that particular flower, while undoubtedly admired and cherished by many a cultivated white person, seems to be forever appealing to every member of the negro race I ever knew,-- tutored or untutored, fine or coarse, gentle or violent. --the response to the appeal of its loveliness always seem immediate and profound. I have always felt it such a pity that many a white person, especially those of the business like worth, seem to feel it their duty to manifest disdain or indifference to this heavenly flower. Perhaps that is why one sees it cherished by so comparatively few men in a region where it seems advisable to emulate the five cent cigar attitude of hewing to the line and no nonsense about anything save the pragmatic. Perhaps that is why it is so wonderfully refreshing to see the raw field hand, uncouth and unrefined in almost every human expression, re-act with unfailingly with delicacy and adoration to this lovely creation of God.

You might file this in your section reserved for the most dull communications. I'll perhaps do better on the morrow.....

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Thursday, May 21st, 1953.  
Memorandum:

Imagine my surprise today when the postman put in an appearance. What with no mail since Saturday, I was naturally braced against a deluge of 1st class items.

The sum and substance of my allotment was last week's copy of Life.

Naturally I was entranced to receive it, but I must say I am now bracing myself against the morrow, assuming he makes his rounds again.

It would appear that red river is not going to spill over into this area. If so, we at this bend of the river will have been exceedingly lucky. There is some kind of a doings closer to the Gulf where a steady breeze from the south tended to pile up sea water into the bayou and river mouths, thereby slowing up the seaward flow of rivers in this area with water backing up North of Alexandria, it is said. It is too early to know if this will effect us, but it is supposed red river will not spill unless some sudden change appears.

Today remained sunny and the thermometer was in the 90's, with a promised low of 75 tonight and higher readings on the morrow.

I was a bit surprised this morning at 9 when I learned Celeste and Madam Regard had decided to drive to Alexandria to attend some kind of a frolic. Where journey must have been round-about, for I believe they had to go North to Watchitoches, thence East to Clarence and Winfield and thence South someplace or other and then into Alexandria, --perhaps via Boyce. Tonight at supper, M. T. expressed concern for Madam Regard. It seems that during the day the water has risen along all the routes out of Alexandria to the North, making it necessary for anyone coming here







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thus, when the mail came today, bringing your May 15th letter to me. I had the unique satisfaction of having both your letter as of that date plus the one of earlier date. Thus Arenbourg and I have been able to celebrate all day, and this afternoon I took time out to glance through my gifts that had been unwrapped earlier, and all in all, the day was marvelous.

And with the birthdays being celebrated, there is the news of your own activities, every one of which filled me with gratitude to you for having shared these things with me. I am so glad you were able to have the Charles Laughton evening and I thank you sincerely for giving me an account of the various things he included in his program. Your mention of his rendition of the Gattysburg address recalled so vividly his presentation of the same masterpiece in "Ruggles of Red Gap", --as inspiring a performance as I ever saw on stage or screen.

I can well imagine the hurly-burly that has been yours as of the entire week last past, but I am holding the thought that there may have been some sort of a breather as soon as your guest got on his way.

There was quite a batch of mail today but I explored none of it save your two letters, for nothing else seemed of any moment after I had read and re-read them.

After another day of cloudless skies and the thermometer in the 90's, a lovely new moon silvers the white garden. Peace obtains on all sides, --but everyone is holding his breath. Seepage began on the new embankments which replaced those torn away by the 1945 floods. Red River is to the top of the levees but is not spilling over and although stationary in height at the moment, is likely to start falling very slowly within the next 36 hours, it is said. The point where the water is seeping through is about due East of Bermuda, on the west bank of Red River, and we shall be inundated if it breaks through, but we hold our breath and hold the thought. The highest the water will come here is to the bamboo at the back of the white garden. --at us hope it doesn't come anywhere at all.

Melrose and Magnolia are but two of the plantations for miles up and down the Red River sending workmen to fill sandbags and to cover the ominous damp spots that begin appearing at the base of the levee. --Williams who had recently brought Mexicans in for laboring in the cotton fields, has set them to work on the sandbags. And Red River rolls on, and the White Garden is placid and lovely in the moonlight, and my day has been happy and my night filled with faith because one person in this world is sufficient to make one believe in God and this or that person named Lee through whom gives everything to man.....

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Sunday, May 24th, 1953. It's still everybody's birthday, the skies cloudless and all the roads save one sealed off. Red River never did get out of bounds, --as up to now, at least, and what with the crest having passed, the outlook is promising that it may not go on a rampage this season anyway, and while the lake spreading across the Montrose lane continues to expand from the cement highway to Grandpere's graveyard, it doesn't present any danger to the Arenbourg-Yucca domaines, and in spite of the downpour of a week ago, I found it well to water the cinna beds and day lilies along about first dark tonight.

I finally got around to wade through some of the mail. There didn't prove to be any of much interest. I shall send some along under separate cover but if you don't get around to explore it, you will have missed little or nothing.

I dined across the fence today and Celeste told me she and Lee Hertzog had dropped by the lady doctor's house last evening for a little nip before heading for home. She said she had spent quite a lot of time with a local photographer taking pictures of the flood during the past week. One night just before supper time, --I guess that is about 9 at the Worsley menage, the lady doctor answered the phone. It was the office of the Sheriff calling. The operator said there was a message for the lady doctor, to wit:

"The Sheriff will bring Mr. Worsley home." Naturally she asked for details, but the operator could give her none. It is wonderful what strength of nerves the lady doctor possesses in everything except uncertainty as regards the safety of her husband when he is in the big road. Naturally her mind began conjuring up all sorts of horrible things, accidents, drownings, wrecks, --heaven alone knows what, --and "The Sheriff will bring Mr. Worsley home". And finally he did just that and great was the let down of nerve strain. It seems now, the photographer and several of the Sheriff's deputies had been engaged in various pursuits in the neighborhood of Cypress where the flood waters are especially wide, realizing



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he could not get back to town as soon as he had anticipated, Don asked the sheriff, then using a two way radio transmitter with his office, to have the office telephone the lady doctor that the party was being detained by some circumstance of the flood and that they would be along in a little while and that the sheriff would drive him home directly after the business of rescue work had been terminated. The message, as delivered, being laconic, however, was much more up-setting than would have been no message at all, and while none of this is scarcely worth passing along, I do so regardless, as a prize example of how a chain of circumstances can go far in up-setting a lady's peace of mind, --and all over nothing at all.

A telephone call from Mrs. Lawton, friend of the Dormon gals, reports that a letter had just come through to Watchtowers from Briarwood, saying that the gals are doing fine, although their property caught the tail end of the tornado that swept through that section a week ago Saturday night. Lightning struck a couple of trees and the rains washed out some newly placed gravel on their private road, but otherwise nothing very much happened. Mrs. Lawton believes that "ole 'Virginie" is fast losing her mental and visual faculties but feels senility has long been on the way, at least a year or two before the accident, but perhaps the latter hastened this along a little.

This morning I heard Mr. Bryson and his associates dip into old creek legend and have a go at Jason and his girl friend, and this afternoon I was lucky enough to catch Edward VIII in his broadcast with Robert Trout from the liner, United States, somewhere on the Atlantic, giving highlights on coronations Edward had known. Reception today was excellent and quite novel, what with so many recent programs for over a month being ripped into nothingness by the constant crackle of static while tornadoes were whizzing around the Gulf States area. Next week invitation to learning what will have a go at some Balzac novel and I shall listen with avidity, -- I know so little about Balzac whose personality and writings somehow always succeeded in eluding my fancy.

Clemence came to see me on Saturday morning. She is "studying about" making a garden around her new cabin. They tell me she got her household effects well settled only after she had set up her sign in front of her house, reading: "Art Exhibition, 25 cents, Thank you". We found quite a few things she can plant at various times in the months ahead. She says her little turkeys hatched out nicely and that she brought them with her to her new home. I can't quite picture turkeys and a flower garden all wrapped into one but Clemence is a bag and if anybody can unit two such unlikely elements, it would be little old Clemence. Do hope your week end embraced no end of leisure and quiet.....

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6100

Monday, May 25th, 1952.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your grand letter of the 19th in today's post.

It goes without saying that I was shocked by the news of the wreck. I am burning a special candle in the Chapel by way of --thanksgiving that things went no worse and am praising God that you were not all tangled up in the business. It's a curious thing that I have never been able to rid myself of little clouds of worry when I know that those dear to me are traveling by automobile. I don't seem to worry about any of them being the cause of an accident, but I see so much tearing up and down the road by people in no physical condition to drive that I am always fearful some such no-account driver will be the cause of a wreck, escaping himself unhurt, and being the cause of something terrible to the innocent occupant of the other car. What with every automobile manufacturer seeming bent on designing each new model car for more and more speed and what with recklessness and inebriation being constantly at the wheel of an almost guaranteed average of cars, the wonder is that there aren't more people we know who are victims of such combinations.

And may I thank you for telling me about the doings of the tornado at Ferriday and the caving of the cliffs at Watchez. I had heard of neither. I suppose both news items were broadcast within hours from the time they happened but for several days the swirling of storm after storm through this area kept the radio in a constant sputter, making it impossible to get any news or anything else. Perhaps Mrs. Brandon will send us some particulars regarding the Watchez thing, via Atlanta. It seems to odd that people living in this area never mention such matters to me, although I suppose they never really get around to read the newspaper.

It was so kind of you to offer to write some letters for me intended for those born on May 8th, but I think I shall be able to manage them alright, as there apparently will not be many, and as these names will come to hand not in a single group but from day to day so one of the secretaries can read one off at a sitting, and thus round them up over a period of days without any especial effort. Yes, I think the Sunday sketch of Yucca would be a marvelous item on which to pen such messages, as some of them may be saved by the



happiness it has brought to my day.....



6103

6103

Carmen Breasale telephoned this morning to say that the Matchitoches display at the Louisiana Purchase exhibition in Shreveport was being returned shortly and the idea was growing locally in favor of having the exhibit put on display somewhere in Matchitoches. She asked if I would have any objection to having my "tresors" included. I wouldn't. She said some gentleman from California had just dropped in at the Chamber of Commerce and purchased plates, --three, I believe she said, to take with him to friends out yonder. She seems delighted at having the plates at the Chamber of Commerce, and I only hope there is no vast disappointment on the part of millspaugh when they find it out.

I got off a response to the Montespan letter, asking her to destroy it on reading, feeling perfectly sure she could be trusted not to do so. It was a serious document and composed not at all with her mind, as you may readily imagine, but rather for the very person to whom I feel sure she will rush right in to showing it. Among other things I took occasion to remark upon was the fact that occasionally the pinch of poverty prevented me from undertaking somethings that might reflect to the glory of Melrose but that I thought it fun to see what could be made out of what there was to hand and I congratulated her on her ability to see the values of certain things which some of those, born to close to them, fail to recognize. I also remarked that in the past more credit should have gone to the Madam's son, since without him, she would never have been able to accomplish the things she did when the scale she maintained and when she died, had it not been for that particular son, Melrose would have died, too. I also said quite frankly that as I glanced across the country from Louisiana to the Carolinas, I could find no private plantation which in recent years had received as much favorable publicity and one which had been featured in so much porcelain that would out-live, as a record, the plantation itself, and that I am glad to have had an opportunity to lend a hand in some of the business. I ignored the matter of a possible check later in the season, perhaps it will never come anyway, and if it does, I shall use it as an excuse to write another letter in returning it. Surely it is an odd set-up when the lady living closest me to the place comprehends nothing while the other, whatever her motive, at least makes a gesture of lending a hand. As has been so aptly remarked,

"You have to be born in the South to understand colored people".

Again my thanks for your letter of the 20th and all the happiness it has brought to my day.....

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6104

wednesday, May 27th, 1936.

Memorandum:

The glorious weather continues and the waters of the Red drop in fractions of a foot but the Lysandrevelle problem remains static with wavelets still lapping the tombstones in Grandpere's graveyard every time a breeze blows.

Day before yesterday, three youths from the college appeared at the front gate about supper time. They wanted a tour and I gave a brief one to them. Then this afternoon, they all turned up again, bringing a fourth associate with them, and asking if they might have another. They might and it was heartening to see the way they avidly absorbed everything they all had recently heard of. Williams, author of "Mr. Lincoln and His Generals" in some lecture course, although none of them had ever read his book. They wanted to discuss a billion aspects of ante-bellum and reconstruction matters, and I was genuinely sorry when time ran out on us so fast and I had to push them out the front gate. I thought of one of your problem children of the past year, bored with everything, and marveled at the up-lift a little curiosity and interest in any subject presents.

During the morning, two different painters, unknown to each other, chanced to come this way, asking for permission to paint. One of them wanted to do the big house, the other the African house, so there wasn't any chance of them getting into each other's perruque over the difference in treatment of the same subject.

One of them who apparently makes his home in Florida, had sought out this bend of the river in spite of the high water on most of the roads because he had heard somebody in New Orleans talking about the place and a set of porcelain. He asked if he might have a set of the Cane River plates before he began painting, for he said his mind would be more at rest, knowing that that matter had been taken care of and at the last moment he would be forced to take off before having acquired a set.

....wotomans



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things at the big house continue to rock along with such perfection one feels convinced it is all too good to last. The food continues of the same quality and deliciousness, and one sees such evidence of interest on the part of the cook as a genuine attempt to bring forth this or that item she thinks will please the people at her board. For example, although there have been buckets of milk every day for the past 7 years, nothing was ever done with any of it, other than the placing of a pitcher on the table. --and the rest of it given to the hogs. But Juanita noticed that J. M. had brought home some cottage cheese from town on Monday night, and the next morning she asked me if I knew how the stuff was made. I thought I did, and before anybody could say Jack Robinson, she had stirred up a fine mess and was serving it to J. M. for his supper. Little acts like that surely show straws in the wind as to a will to please.

From where I sit, however, I am under the impression Juanita may be pregnant and if so, that means she will have to be taking a little time out before long. But what with her little daughter being able, probably, to give her aid in the baby department, perhaps her absence will not be for long. What with Clemence having taken up her abode hard by, I suppose it may well be that she will be pressed into service during Juanita's absence, and so everything will turn merrily enough, and in the mean time, I shall hold the thought that Juanita is not, as seems to appear, "great with child".

I haven't felt the impulse to do any reading at the end of the day, especially since the weather turned so warm and humid, for sleep creeps up on me almost before I collapse and call it a day. And this is just as well, for my machine went out of whack a while back and there isn't much likelihood of getting it fixed before Mrs. Coombs recovers from her hospitalization after-maths, for I prefer to hold it here unused for a while rather than to send it by parcel post to Baton Rouge to have it fixed down there. --the State office for such business, for while the attention the machine receives down yonder at the hands of the experts is somehow always nullified by the bouncing around the thing must undergo on its return trip here, following the repairs, and so I continue to get caught up on my sleep, and glad of any excuse not to clutter up the mails at this hurly-burly postal confusion with the somewhat cumbersome cartons of the talking books. And so I fold for the moment in bracing myself against an early dawn for doings tomorrow....

1013

6106

Thursday  
Friday, May 28th, 1953.

Memorandum:

You are getting a break with this memo, inasmuch as I am going to dash off but a couple of lines and thereby affording you an opportunity to turn the more quickly to matters of more interest.

With both the heat and humidity in the 90's, I foolishly consumed too much water the other day and so am forced to mosey about at vastly reduced speed for a day or so, which is probably just as well, for I don't mind getting caught up a little on the shut-eye department.

The local well water is washed through so many tanks, filled with so many different kinds of chemicals, that one's system is effected if one drinks immediately at some time or other just before or just after all the various tanks have been newly stocked with the astonishing assortment of stuff that goes into them. And I drank to deeply at some such time and so am now prepared to go light on Juanita's fine food, --an upset stomach being able to accomplish what plain will power couldn't accomplish.

I continue hearing much talk about "Moulin Rouge" and find that most people like it enormously and a few don't like it at all. I rather wish I had taken myself to town to get some sort of an impression. Madam Segard liked it for its human qualities, J. M. didn't like it because he had supposed it was going to be a musical thing, and Mrs. Coombs did like it and Ora didn't or was disappointed, and so the name of Toulouse-Lautrec finds itself on all lips and children of today, --and grown-ups, seem to have a wonderful opportunity to learn something about one of the French Impressionists which those of a generation earlier would never have been blessed with.

One of these days, somebody will make a movie that will be a combination of "Lost week end" and the biography of Edgar Allan Poe, and when it is done, it will provide the movie-goer with something to contemplate, what with a famous figure as a peg on which a study of alcoholism is hung, and because of the vague familiarity of the public with the character around which the thing centers, the message might turn out to be twice as impressive.



6108

6107

The water which continues to submerge so many an adjoining cotton field, enables melrose to secure an unusual amount of idle hoe hands and one result of other people's disasters is the fact that the melrose crop has been hoed with amazing alacrity. Usually hoes are swinging all through May and June without a let up, but thanks to the unexpected amount of day laborers, the crop has already been hoed twice and at supper tonight, J. asked me if I couldn't use a flock of melrose hoe hands to work in the gardens tomorrow, since something must be given them to do between now and the final and third round in the fields.

Naturally I always grab at as many as come my way and I set them to attacking stuff that required no supervision, -- such as cleaning up stray bamboo stalks in the iris garden, etc., for I propose doing my little myself before the week end has come and gone.

I think there is nothing in the enclosure of any interest. It somehow brings to mind the title of a chicken's novel, -- one "Bleak House", and I am truly sorry for poor madam -- also but perhaps this particular letter was composed at an unusually low period and the mere writing of it gave her spirits a chance to touch bottom so that they were automatically on the rise by the time she posed it.

Again Senator M. A. R. has kicked over the traces by confusing the nation's attitude toward international relations in his "go-it-alone-in-Africa" speech. It has always astonished me that he and McCarthy don't seem to realize how much damage they can do to the country they profess to hold in such high esteem by their broadsides on public affairs that invariably seem to give the administration and the nation a black eye.

Such cleverness and such stupidity, all rolled into one, and I cannot help supposing that one of these days M. A. R. will be proposing the giving away of the public domain to private concerns, and thundering away from his senate seat as though his action were the only one based on common sense and sound business.

Like those gentlemen in the Kremlin, however, it seems to me M. A. R. is forever kicking the pedestal on which he stands out from under him with his own efforts, and so perhaps the amount of harm done on the broader field will be lessened by the spectacle he makes of himself.

But now I must fold for this sitting but will be back again on the morrow, feeling as fresh as a daisy....

6108

6108

Friday, May 29th, 1953.  
My head continues to feel as heavy as a dunce's, but while I have no appetite as yet, I feel no revulsion toward food, and about tomorrow I shall be back on my normal inclination toward things gastronomic, I reckon.  
I know not as to how the mails are being handled but letters these days seem to come in batches. Yesterday and today there were none, and it is said that as 38 inches of water still covers the Texas and Pacific railroad tracks between Montrose and Perry, it will probably be a while before normalcy in postal deliveries will be re-established.  
One of the plantation negroes, A. Brown, brought me the enclosed note from another negro in Alexandria, along with a sketch he had made, copying a head of a girl reproduced on the front page of Life recently. There is nothing special about the work but it is interesting that the person should be as gifted as he is. I do not know the writer of the letter, but A. Brown told him of me. I think the letter itself is both quaint and pitiful. If the man could only come up thimble and marry the widow hunter, they might set up a joint art exhibition and have lots of fun, I should think.

It just occurs to me that Henry Johnson seems to be a popular name among negroes in this area. There are several families of them living in the Bermuda area and I know of a gentleman all of whom bear the name of Henry Johnson.  
I heard "cattle talk" at the store this morning, stemming from the weekly Wednesday auction held in Alexandria on Wednesdays and Fridays. On Wednesday, last past, cattle that last year sold at \$200 to \$300 hundred dollars went for \$50 to \$60 dollars. So many people have had to through their stock on to the market that the current price is wonderfully depressed but I don't suppose the quantity will be sufficient to lower retail prices in the big cities or in other sections of the country. There talk about 250,000 head of Louisiana cattle without pastureage but I know not if that is as much as a drop in the bucket. It seems to me that 150 million people.  
.....



8013

6109

Clemence came by to see me again today, and although I was not much inclined toward entertaining, I did have a few stalwart youths working in the gardens and they could dig her some ribbon grass which she wants to set out in her new garden. Off hand, what with the thermometer at 97, and the sun boiling, I wouldn't think this would be the ideal time for transplanting anything but palms, but Gardener's Garter is difficult to kill and Clemence will have the fun of trying to make it grow anyway.

I asked her if she had ever tried painting a picture of Christ on the Cross. She hadn't. I pointed out that there has generally been something cock-eyed about all such pictures, in that the background always suggests winter, or at least the end of the world, whereas all the pictures of Easter, only three days later, are always way with vegetation, if any. And so I suggested she do a colored man on the Cross and have a big old magnolia or some such tree in bloom on one side, and perhaps a picture of the African house somewhere in the background. She thought a log cabin would be prettier than the African house and I told her I thought a log cabin would be just fine. Clemence never did paint anything of any account when it was done to order, but after she has milled over the above idea, she may eventually sense it as her own idea and bring forth something interesting.

One nice thing about yesterday's indisposition, it gave me an opportunity to get caught up on some of my recent magazines, and I was glad to turn through some earlier ones that I had enjoyed a few weeks back, -- the one on African, and the lovely reproduction of Ingres things.

In the white garden, the rabbits who are wont to disport themselves with vast abandon on moonlight nights are now so tame that they don't bother to scamper to shelter even in broad daylight. It is pleasant to have them so tame, although I do wish they would give up their taste for the hearts of the white sinners planted about the base of the sun dial. They don't eat up the plant or harm the leaves but merely nip the top bud out. But sinners, being of the nature they are, tend to create two hearts where one has been removed, and so from here on out, it's going to be a question as to which one will win the race, the animal keeping ahead of vegetation or the hearts out-distancing the animals.

If you chanced to hear Mr. Morrow tonight, you probably heard Janet Morrow whom Mr. Morrow referred to as my partner, leading one to assume that Janet is Mrs. Morrow. It is so seldom for commentators to have wives of whom anyone ever heard, I was struck by this appearance. J. M., afflicted with my yesterday malady, got some medicine from the lady doctor and gave me some, so I am alright again.....

1113

6110

Sunday, May 31st, 1953.

Memorandum:  
How nice to find your Wednesday letter in Saturday's post, together with the pictures clipped from the Journal. The one showing the bridge over Red River at Natchitoches must have been taken from an air plane or on the heights at Grand Ecure which is certainly in Natchitoches parish if not precisely within the limits of the town by the same name. This is the first picture I had seen of the high water. The Natchitoches Times had some fine pictures, they told me, but when I tried to round up a copy, found the issue was sold out and everyone had sent their own copies to friends far afield.

That you should not have seen any flood shots at the newsreel seems a little odd. Newsreel seems so good on disasters, but even as the absence of news items from broadcasts tend to puzzle one on occasion, so does like omissions from the pictorial renditions of the movie cameras on occasion. The fact that so many air planes and helicopters "hoovered" over the area for so many days led me to suppose the camera boys were busy as bees but perhaps there wasn't sufficient drama in the expanding ocean to make them interesting to average audiences, or perhaps Louisiana floods aren't very photogenic.

Saturday's post was rather heavy and contained an assortment of letters, many of which seem to have been written on Wednesday or thereabouts. I suppose some of them were held for a day or two at some station up or down the road and the whole thing delivered at one single swoop.

Dr. Rand and Ed Rand came to see me this afternoon. They report the road to Alexandria is now re-opened all the way to Berry at which point the cars come along the river road by Elrose and on through Bermuda where they can turn off and hit the cement again at Bayou L'Ange. I suppose the railroads may be expected to start functioning again before long although there will be a bottle neck between Cypress and Berry. It is said that vast trainloads of some kind of ore originating



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6111

in South America and hauled to New Orleans by boat, is carried by rail over the Texas and Pacific line, passing this way, en route to the vast manufacturing centers using the Grand Coulee power system in the Columbia Valley. The General mentioned this to me some time back and expressed the opinion that keeping this rail line open was important for the even flow of raw materials. Chamber of Commerce telephoned on Saturday afternoon to ask if some Red Cross people might come down. They might, --and turned out to be very lovely. Over a period of years so many Red Cross and Veteran Bureau people having business in Louisiana seem to have hailed from the State of Ohio and invariably they have been so nice. I haven't had the courage to toss brickbats at "go-it-alone" R. A. A couple of them wanted plates of the same River Country of which place they hadn't heard until their duties had brought them into this section of Louisiana and they expressed delight at having discovered the plates that would provide them with such a comprehensive impression of this scene of their 1953 labors.

Returning momentarily to the hands, I must say it seems a little odd they have been so long in getting up this way to see about their property. We had a big old rain on a Tuesday, as I recall, preceding the Sunday one that actually got things under, perhaps it was a couple of weeks before the Sunday rain. Anyhow, I telephoned Mr. Rand on Wednesday morning, notifying him of the alarming rate the river was rising. He said he would be up that afternoon but I think nobody came. A week or so later when water was really mounting, it seems odd they didn't try making it along about the time Celeste and Madam Regard were going to Alexandria for a Pontifical Mass. That as it may, some of their fine speed boats, costing several thousand dollars, it is said, remained in the boat house, the later being eventually covered by the rising river and today Mr. Rand remarked that it was obvious that for a while at least during the past couple of weeks, the speed boat must have been nothing less than a submarine. They have had so many camps during the years, scattered about in different parishes, I am beginning to wonder if they simply grow tired of them a tera while. Certainly their apathy regarding the safety of their camp possessions seems little short of indifference.

I heard the invitation to learning do salsa today and enjoyed every word of it. The weather remains both hot and humid, making it pleasant to be indoors. I so much hope you had an opportunity to do many a thing in comparative quiet, even as did I. My health is quite back to normalcy once more, praises be.....

0113

6112

Monday, June 1st, 1953.

Memorandum: Not -- hot...and everything except getting religion seems to be responding in various ways to the prolonged heat. In Natchitoches our colored friends are "getting religion" but no matter how hot it is down this way, people really don't experience it until late July or early August. Miss Maude, wife of Napoleon Bonaparte Carter, got her elixir out of a bottle today. Her husband was away on business and, as is her custom, Miss Maude took over the operation of the garage and the uncorking of fire water. The situation reached such a pitch that along about three o'clock the mechanics finally just pulled out and left Miss Maude to crash about on her own hook. But Miss Maude loves company at such times and she descended on the store where she announced to some men with whom he was in conference that she wanted a book to read and one of the gentlemen to read it to her. Miss Maude is a sight. From what I had to say at supper, he hadn't had so much fun since the rainy Christmas day when he told the boys to saddle the dead mule and prop it up against the fence so Miss Maude, determined to ride a horse, was insistent an animal be provided her.

The heat must have entered into the postal system, too, for the postman made his rounds, bringing not a single letter or newspaper to anyone at this post office, and taking off an hour ahead of schedule so that my Sunday memo probably hasn't reached you until this one, too, has come to hand, unless the clerk took the mail to town last night.

On Sunday, Mr. Rand told me that Mrs. Bowman had telephoned him on Saturday, asking if he might be coming up here on Sunday, and asking him if he would contact me regarding the letter she had written me regarding plates. I assume she perhaps needed some merchandise and perhaps asked me to send same by Mr. Rand. He didn't know what Mrs. she had covered in her letter, and as I have not received the letter as yet, we got no where in that department.



6113

6113

attributed to the heat wave one little mix up in the pre-coronation news releases from London. According to radio news, the British Expedition succeeded in scaling Mount Everest, the world's last unconquered peak, on Friday, May 29th. According to the news broadcast, this accomplishment was reported immediately to Buckingham Palace where the fact was suppressed until June 1st, to present to the Queen as a coronation gift. The two accounts I heard reported that on Monday, June 1st, the Queen was awakened hours in advance of her time to arise, and the glad tidings conveyed to her. All this is undoubtedly true, but it does seem odd that with the news to hand before the Queen retired, and if, as commentators have reported, she needed all the little sleep she could get to carry her through the heavy ordeals of coronation, why in the world they had to awaken her to impart the Mount Everest ascent, I cannot imagine.

To write these lines, a dozen colorful sinia blossoms nod their individual heads in the bouquet here on my desk. --a nod for every tap of a key. I was perfectly delighted when a white flower beat all the others in unfolding the initial blossom of the season. It was from the seed you sent at holiday time and although the seeds of the white ones were planted at the same time, some beds of the multi-colored ones were planed, this one particular plant seemed to be out ahead from the inception of the race. Naturally it followed its progress with close attention and became more intent on the business when it appeared a red one was going to come into flower ahead. But the white one was merely holding back to make a final spurt, and here it nods before me, slap in the middle of a gay cluster of scarlet, bronze, purple and yellow "old maids", as the negroes style sinias.

I believe I forwarded a letter from Mrs. Stirling in yesterday's letter, in view of the somewhat be-fuddled state the original order for the Audubon-Oakley plate found itself, and because Carolyn was acquainted with the lady and the set-up, I asked Carolyn what in the world she supposed was the matter of the woman. I was entranced with her response which makes me laugh every time I hear Celeste or somebody mention Mrs. Sterling's name. Carolyn, in response to my query, pondered a moment and then said:

"I think I have discovered what's wrong with her.... before Mrs. Stirling's birth, her mother was frightened by a couple of jealousies."

So June gets under way and may be an elegant month for little Miss Lee.....

6114

6114

Tuesday, June 2nd, 1953.

Memorandum: I hope you have had an opportunity to hear some of the coronation festivities, especially the running account of the progress of the ceremonies in Westminster, interspersed with direct spoken words of the participants. Apparently the weather wasn't cooperative but perhaps that tended to make the pageant taking place within the Abbey that more intimate and therefore the more impressive.

I imagine everybody except possibly South Ireland and Egypt would gladly have exchanged whatever sunshine they might have had today in order that London might have had rain for it, for whether one needed rain elsewhere or not, surely London didn't. As for Melrose, this is the 15th day of sunshine and 90 degree temperatures and in spite of the lake that still engulfs the Montrose lane, rain is really wanted by every other planter save those along Bayou Brevelle.

In his letter received today, Dora speaks of a fine map of the United States of 1803, and as he generously offers to obtain one for me, I think I shall write him tonight that I shall be entranced to accept, for I think it would be nice to have one for our holding shelf.

The balance of the mail seems to be of little or no interest but I shall send some along regardless in order that you may keep abreast of things.

Your friend, Madam Cloutier, telephoned me again today, repeating a conversation she had had with me yesterday. She threatens to come down to spend the day with me soon. Not too soon, I hope. It seems she is winding up her Prudhomme genealogy and wants me to give her a few final twists for the thing. I shall be glad to do the twisting on the genealogy, if only the lady herself will avoid getting herself tangled up in the sitting. I suggested she outline what she has in mind over the telephone to me one day before she comes, and I will cook up something before she arrives.



6115

6115

Over Columbia last night, I enjoyed Eric Severid's editorial, expressing doubt as to the wisdom of Mutual making such frantic efforts to get the first pictures of the Coronation to this country. He pointed out that there is no longer any point in newspapers rushing out extra editions since the scoop element in news print pretty well vanished with the advent of radio. He opined that there might be some point in getting out jet planes to show pictures of the races at Churchill Downs, since in the mind of the average sports enthusiasts, there might be some doubt as to which horse might come in first, but he felt that in the case of the coronation practically everybody was fairly well assured that Elisabeth would come in first regardless. His point was that the majority of radio listeners would rather know when a well co-ordinated broadcast of the coronation would be put on the air and arrange their schedule to listen to a well rounded presentation, as opposed to people all in a tizzy to catch the first glimpse of whatever shots Mutual could rush across the Atlantic. I thought his point well taken although I suppose Mutual will come back with a "sour grapes" .....  
telephone interruption.....  
It was Mrs. Wood calling from town to say that in the June 16th issue of Look Magazine, appear reproductions of several American primitive can ases, including one by one Clementine Hunter, photographed by one Clarence John Laughlin. I believe she said her residence is mentioned as Louisiana. I believe she said the article is by one Charlotte Willard, and as that name strikes no bell in my memory, I suppose Miss Willard may be a staff writer on Look who has been of some use to me.  
She also said that J. Aswell Esquire, had recently sold a novelette to some magazine I never heard of, -- "Woman's something or other". -- something quite unknown to me. She said she had seen Rosalind who expressed herself as exhausted from typing for her husband, as she does all his manuscripts and this novelette was a rush job, and that at the moment Rosalind is again suffering from shingles, -- which, I suppose, is a nervous disorder. Had I been an Aswell and had felt the responsibility of the Matchitoes' arish writings of that Victor "arl Little on my shoulders, I, too, would probably have something worse than shingles, but apparently the Aswells felt no responsibility for the doings of their guest, and perhaps the more so since everyone seems to feel that J. Aswell Esquire, had a couple of figures in the Little pie anyway.

And now I must turn to correspondence I hope you are getting an opportunity to hear the London

6116

6116

Wednesday, June 3rd, 1953.  
Memorandum

In spite of the heavy rains, synonymous with grassy cotton, and the fact that for ten days the hoe hands couldn't get into the cotton patches, there seems to be very little grass for the field workers to contend with, including Aurelia, who, by the way, confided to me the other day that swinging a hoe was so much more pleasant, in spite of the boiling sun, than working in an air condition house for anybody with unpredictable whims.

And so with scant work for the hoe hands, I am getting extra help in the gardens, and I can always make use of that, especially right now when everything is growing so madly.  
The hot weather persists, this being the 14th day of thermometer readings in the 90's and the weather bureau can find no signs of rain anywhere in the region.  
Alexandria is now the seat of the Red Cross organization attending to stricken areas in Louisiana. What's your office telephoned today, saying Washington big wigs were coming to Louisiana this week end and had expressed a wish to visit, please on Sunday, if possible. It is, of course, possible, if not convenient. Besides, one always ought to try to expend a little charity on behalf of officers of charitable organizations, don't you think so.  
I appreciated the enclosure, -- one of those rare letters which apparently someone felt impelled to write without any necessity for the doing. The mention of Irma Somperysac Willard reminds me that a day or two ago someone mentioned that the engagement of her son has just been announced. He is something or other in the Navy, -- having graduated from Annapolis a few years back. The lucky bride-to-be is said to be the daughter of some naval person of some importance, although my informant didn't seem to know anything more about that point, plus the fact that the girl in the case hails from the New York of the Washington area. Irma must have had to change her mind at that point, for she had always had in mind



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6117

for her son to marry a Louisiana number, although why Louisiana  
I never could imagine.

Although there was no mail, - incoming, - today,  
I was glad to learn that sometime last night an  
initial try was made at running a skeleton train over the  
tracks from Cypress through Montrose and on to Werry and that  
the attempt was successful. I believe old fashioned  
steam engines were used instead of the regular Diesel ones,  
as the fire box of the former are higher from the ground and  
therefore less vulnerable than the lower slung electric  
or rather later fashioned Diesels. The fact that a  
skeleton train did get through leads one to assume that  
the restoration of regular service may not be in the too far  
distant future, and I am hoping that a restoration of  
train service will me a return to some regularity of mail  
deliveries.

At supper tonight, the clerk remarked on the impossibility  
of getting sufficient frozen food of a particular type to  
satisfy the demands of the plantation people on Melrose.  
Both Swift and Armour serve this region from their  
Shreveport bases with refrigerated trucks twice a week.  
The store has fairly ample space in its ice boxes to keep  
frozen foods but the space seems inadequate to hold enough  
frozen chicken backs to supply the demand between rounds made  
by the trucks. I don't know exactly what "chicken backs"  
may consist of but from what I hear, a gather each  
cardboard box contains four pieces, -- the larger boxes 7  
pieces, of sections of the backs or chicken. I suppose  
these may constitute a portion of the carcass of birds  
which have been dismembered for those who prefer drum sticks,  
or breasts or whatever. Locally, the price for a box of  
chicken backs is about sixty cents and every family goes in  
heavily for them. I gather there is scarcely enough meat on  
them to make anything like a meal but they find them  
excellent for making gumbo, various types of  
gravy for their rice dishes, etc. in urban centers,  
frozen foods, I suppose, have been on the market  
for 15 or 20 years, -- how well do I remember investing  
in synde back in Manhattan, but frozen foods for the  
remote plantation stores constitute something quite new  
for the cabin people, and it is pleasurable to note with  
what relish they await the arrival of the delivery  
trucks, without the extension of electricity into  
rural areas this delight would be impossible, of course, and  
again I call down blessings on the memory of F. V. M. for  
having furthered this extension of electricity, thinking the  
while how happy he must have been if he envisioned half  
the happiness his projects echo down through the years....

3113

6118

Thursday, June 4th, 1953.

Memorandum:

The heat wave rolls on but a pleasant vagrant breeze from  
the direction of the Gulf made the upper 90's seem temperate  
enough.

There wasn't so much of interest in today's post  
but I'll send along whatever remains to hand. It is a  
commentary on the current state of the mails that Robina's  
letter of Saturday, May 30th, bore the Shreveport cancella-  
tion of the same May 30th, although it reached this bend of  
the river slightly belatedly today. Saturday to  
Thursday to travel 99 miles seems fairly leisurely, I  
must say.

Of course I didn't witness the Television reception of  
the Eisenhower-Cabinet chat last night, at I did listen  
to the straight broadcast and I wasn't charmed. Frankly,  
my impressions were more or less a blank. Apparently  
Barton, Austin and Osborn had done a good job of  
coaching, for everyone seemed to know his lines readily  
enough, but I expect I was prepared to be prejudiced to  
begin with, -- the more so, immediately following the  
recent gavotte danced by the Lady Secretary with the American  
Medical Association.

To begin with, it is interesting that the thing  
should have been televised, for surely there must be  
loads of people, to some of whom F.D. R. was want to address him-  
self, who are quite without TV sets. And then, in spite of  
the readiness with which each actor rattled off his lines,  
I somehow had a feeling that the speakers were, in reality,  
tute actors, and I had no idea as to whom the lines they  
spoke might be attributed, -- surely not to them, but  
probably to Barton, Barton, Austin and Osborn, or however  
those several gentlemen sign their respective names.

And lastly, -- although I shall probably revert to the whole  
.....



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6119

business at subsequent sittings, I got the impression that all the stars were so show "talking down" to their unseen audience -- an unfortunate thing by way of impression for a y bevy of politicians to do, but perhaps I was the only one who re-acted thus and perhaps there was no foundation for such an opinion on my part.

It is bad enough when politicians have to read the speeches by too many ghost writers but it seems worse to me when a flock of the politicians not only have to read someone else's lines but also have to rehearse the performance a couple of times before going on the net works, and especially is this so when, as last night, no member of the cast would be set down as famous for his acting. I think B. B. D and O would do well to convince their most distinguished client that in the future when he and his Cabinet contemplate doing folksie fireside chats as a sort of sister act, they would do well to turn the whole thing over to Cecile B. de Mille or some such and let the professional actors dish out the stuff which the ham doesn't seem to be able to serve up convincingly.

You will enjoy Madam Mameo's letter, for while it contains nothing of any particular interest, it is heartening to see that she is possessed of more dash and vigor than her last letter revealed.

The social wheel continues turning at an unrelenting pace, -- Monday, Tuesday Wednesday, etc., etc., yesterday it was some frolic at some camp on the Joyous Coast, today it was at another in the same neighborhood, and so things spin. At supper tonight, J. A. remarked casually enough that the lady had fainted this afternoon and been taken to the hospital for revival and that all that was good since it would provide conversation about something at least.

Today's post brought me an attractively compiled book as forwarded by the General, -- the book apparently sponsored by the Shtyl Corporation. It is entitled "John Law Wasn't So Wrong" and is by none other than Modding Carter. The photographs are very nice, here and there scenes around Louisiana but mostly centering on the oil business, with the illustrations including an air view of the Shtyl plant at Baton Rouge. I gave it to J. A. to turn through and said the Cotton Council should get one like it from Miss Mamey's pen. But I must fold for now but back on the morrow.....

1313

6120

Friday, June 5th, 1953.  
Memorandum:

Another lovely breeze laden day, hot enough to sweat, sufficiently cooled to lend vigor to half a dozen projects.

There was mail today, too, -- a final crumple of the Audubon-Wakley business in the form of a communication from the Park Commissioner of the State whom I know. He said he felt humiliated to write such a letter but that he had felt forced to direct Mrs. Stirling to return the plates ordered by the State, as the State would feel embarrassed about selling an item that memorialized a member of its staff, meaning that Mrs. Stirling's name appears on the plate. He added the glad tidings, however, that jealousies were to be put back on the galleries of Wakley and that in making the new plates, he would be glad if I would include said jealousies and omit Mrs. Stirling's name from the legend.

I felt this was pre-supposing quite a bit, -- "the new Wakley plate", -- jealousies or no jealousies.

I shall respond tonight, making no reference to any new plates and setting forth my complete understanding that the State might feel dreadfully embarrassed about employing an artist to design an Oakley plate and specifying any names to be used in the legend and that further I can readily understand that the Park Commission might hesitate about risking a y state money in having such a plate manufactured, but -- and the but will be big, if someone in no way connected with the State, nor non-reimbursed for any investment in the research and design of the object and in no way supplied with orders or promised orders, -- if said person should portray Oakley in porcelain, I think the State would be straining at a gnat in forbidding any form of cooperation by denying its gift shop the right to sell it as merchandise along with any other items in their shop catering to pilgrims. After all, if the plate is going to be sold anyway, what is the point of every shop having it except the one which should be most interested.



6121

If Mrs. Stirling is smart, she ought to be able to make a killing with the original Audubon-Oakley plates. This is how I figure it: various people will see the plates and some will want them. They will have to go to her or me for them. Shops in the St. Francisville area can carry them and everybody can become acquainted with their existence in Stirling lectures through her mention of them. At Oakley, she can drop a word that while the Park doesn't stock them, they are obtainable in town and she will be glad to notify any shop to send some, if the visitor wishes, to leave his address. In the mean time the Park Commission will be fiddling around waiting for me to design the new plate with jalousies. I can stall that off for years. In the mean time, and before a span of years, I hope, the initial supply of the plates will be exhausted. I shall present a sketch for the approval of the Park Commission with the understanding that this order can be executed only if the initial order is for three times the present quantity involved. Thus the first Oakley will have been disposed of and the second batch paid for before the design is so much as submitted to Rock Hall. And I shall see to it, in the mean time, and this is quite unnecessary, but just as a guarantee, I shall sew up Rock Hall so that no Oakley designs will be executed, save by my order. I believe Edwards quite ethical and this guarantee isn't necessary, but I shall ask for a guarantee regardless. Of course there are other manufacturers who could do the thing, I suppose, but with one Audubon-Oakley already on the market and well stocked by Peliciana shops, it seems most unlikely any other manufacturer would be likely to rush into the execution of such an order.

Well, so much for John James and while he has been something of a headache from start to finish, still there has been fun in the doing, and I shall always be glad that the gesture was made, --and effected, --to preserve Oakley in porcelain, for actually, after all concerned with the present rumpus are dead and for gotten, the Oakley plates will continue to grace many a collector's wall and delight the heart of many an Audubon enthusiast.

Celeste came back from the hospital today, looking as gay and chipper as ever. I dropped by to say howdy this afternoon and did not sit down, as she was entertaining.

So cometh another week to a close. I hope the respite will hold much of happiness for little Miss Lee.....

6122

Sunday, June 7th, 1953.

how that commodity seems in at most unexpected places. There are a case in point:

memorandum:

How nice to find your grand letter in Saturday's post.  
How unfortunate the metropolitan area had such non-cooperative weather for the Memorial Day week end. I can well imagine a couple of disappointments, albeit it each was in juxtaposition to the other as for regrets, but identical as to disappointments.  
But it was enchanting to learn of the preparations you made for listening in on London, as of June 2nd. If Elizabeth takes after Victoria in length of years for her reign, it will be a long time before one has the opportunity to follow through on another Coronation broadcast, and, like you, I felt the better for having listened intently to the services in the Abbey. There was everything about it that seemed to give me a feeling that I, too, was attending a religious service of supreme importance and I am so glad I was able to catch the re-broadcast later on during the same day and then again at night.  
From your account of the unraveling of the educational year, I gather this week end has been busy-busy and let us hope there will be the compensation of quiet when another 7 days roll around, when vacation time used to begin when we were children, the resumption of the autumn semestre seemed years away, but I'll bet before you have had an opportunity to turn around, the children will be tramping back to their educational pursuits again.  
And may I thank you for having provided extra glossy prints for the publicity department for the town of Matchiteches and the Audubon Oakley bus ness. Surely the latter is going to require a little extra drum-beating and it is so nice to know these are going to be coming to hand within the next few days.  
How characteristically thoughtful of you to order making other prints that may be running low at the moment. Frankly, everything is intact at the moment but I bless you regardless for having thought of anticipating any gaps.



6123

6123

News must be getting around that Louisiana flood waters are beginning to recede. This assumption comes from the fact that the number of pilgrims is increasing, with Texas, Iowa, North Carolina and Minnesota being represented on the list of those passing thway.

and speaking of news, it is always fascinating to observe how that commodity seeps in at most unexpected places. Here is a case in point:

Millsbaugh Drug telephoned me on Saturday afternoon. They reported that a gift shop on Chartres Street, New Orleans, wrote the Matchitoches Times, referring to an article about the river plates and asking from whom these might be obtained. The Matchitoches Times responded, --an error, it seems to me, since a shop would want to know the wholesale source, that the shop should address itself to Millsbaugh Drug. The New Orleans shop did so, purchasing two plates at \$3.50 each. The Millsbaugh house filled the order and then telephoned me suggesting I contact the New Orleans shop, and remarked that the plates ordered by the New Orleans shop were being sent with a note enclosed to a lady in Alexandria, Virginia. By chance, the name of the lady was mentioned, --Mrs. Theodore Brunwald, who, of course, is none other than Cousin Josephine.

Today has been the hottest and most sultry we have had but the pilgrims were civilised, which helped much in making one forget the heat. The Red Cross people from Washington were grand and were enchanted with everything they had to explore, --all of which seemed a source of constant surprise to them.

I so much enjoyed the invitation to Learning Topic for to day, --Charles Dickens, Bomby and Son, from the announcement the conclusion of the discussion, I learned that these Sunday conversations are being sold in printed form by book shops now. Let us therefore include "Invitation to Learning" on our next list to the Library of Congress, don't you think so. As near as I can estimate it, one session's discussion could readily be recorded on both sides of a single record. As the average carton in which records are encased is a size that will accommodate about 12 records, a whole year's collection of Sunday morning meetings might be covered by about four cartons. I shall write letters to The Columbia Broadcasting Company, Library of Congress, American Foundation for the Blind, etc. and what I shall recommend is that the recording be taken directly from the broadcasts, thus saving tremendously on manufacturing costs, and at the same time preserving the personalities of the various speakers. So much to talk about.....

6124

6124

Monday, June 8th, 1953  
Memorandum: Although a vast expanse of water still stretches between Melrose and Montrose, the highway is gradually emerging and although some of this thoroughfare is still under a few inches of water, traffic is beginning to use the road, and that fact, to suppose, accounts for the presence of a quick stepping up of the pilgrimage business.

The weather, being wonderfully warm, inclines one toward little physical exertion and so I don't mind the time required to push the visitors about. When, too, I am able to turn a little business in Clemence's direction, thanks to the presence in or among the road runners of those who are impressed by fate, and I keep a copy of the June 16th issue of Look on the pile of books, hard by the Cane River Gohelin, casually referring to the article as the tapestry is being pointed out. People with saunt sense, ample funds and a desire to get on the fat handwagon immediately have to chase over to Clemence's house, and at least three different sets of folks made purchases from her today. I know not how much money changed hands but I imagine a little Miss Hunter is mindful of the advantages of her new situation, geographically speaking.

It's both funny and depressing to observe how quite a few people, passing this way, fortified with ample worldly goods, hedge themselves in by self-imposed fences governing of single expenditures and how they will deny themselves something they want for something of no appeal, just so long as the latter holds the promise of some greater monetary value in years ahead. A case in point came up today when a couple of women from Jefferson, Texas, possessed of ample means, were surveying the plates over the desk in the African House. One of them had recently read Children of Strangers and was perfectly enchanted with the Grandpere plate which she said she wanted so badly. Through a chance remark, which I immediately discovered may be put to practical use in the future, I remarked that the Audubon-Wakley plate, of all these present, would probably become a collector's item first, since its productions would be strictly limited. Neither lady had ever been to the St. Francisville area, but



1813

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both of them immediately decided that they simply had to have the Audubon-Akeley creation, although this meant they had to forego any of the items in the "river series," including Grandpere, because they had already decided that they could limit themselves to investing in but a single plate each. And so, exuding irrepressible self satisfaction at their joint business acumen, the ladies departed, each with an Audubon-Akeley plate in hand, bubbling over with self righteousness for having denied themselves something that meant something to them, as in the Grandpere plate, but utterly exhilarated that they had obtained something that in years to come would be worth a little more from a sales point of view in the case of an object that neither of them ever dreamed of selling.

A letter from Mrs. Stirling advises that she is expressing the Audubon items now at Akeley to me. It was all voiced in a rather casual tone. With freight charges of being about one half of express, I can't imagine why she selected express, knowing as she does that I have ample supplies of the Akeley plate, but that is a mere detail. It is obvious that I shall have no difficulty in getting my investment out of the Audubon-Akeley thing but I shall always marvel at the unfailing adverse twists that have marked every step of this undertaking. Naturally one can but ascribe the whole cockeyed mix up to the evil influences exerted by the "jealousies" of which everyone in the slightest degree associated with Akeley is forever talking.

June 8th, being St. Edward around here but St. Swithin's elsewhere, is a matter of vast interest to all sons of the soil, for if it rains on June 8th, it is bound to rain for the next 40 days, they say. As little aim is desirable for cotton culture, everyone was hoping it could be cloudless, even though the cotton patches are vastly in need of a dab of moisture. About 10:30 this morning, the sun shining full blast, a few drops of rain fell, which was more than sufficient to start heads wagging that we were inevitably destined for 40 days of downpour. The weather bureau does not coincide in this prediction, and however, as nothing by way of rain can be found in the skies for miles around. A zinnia bed of zinnias, planted so the gay colors could be viewed from the summer dining room, came on hard ways this morning, when a stray dog selected that particular spot in all the available space in the gardens to have a fit. When he got through scuffling about, it was the zinnia bed that looked as though it had been the one having the attack. And now I must have a fit in my tub and thence to bed....

1813 Joyous Coast plate

6126

Tuesday, June 8th, 1953.

Memorandum:

All signs fall in a dry time, according to the ancient adage, and yesterday's sprinkle, promising 40 days of rain, brought forth nothing but sizzling sunshine today.

Back from the Louisiana Purchase Exhibition are the screen, the Black Swan, etc.; --everything except the plates which Dr. Kyser wanted to purchase and which I was very glad to have remain with him.

I used the hot weather as an excuse to piddle around with the new families of gold fish which have come into being lately in the big pot. I thought it wise to transfer some of the smaller ones into the aquarium here by my desk and another school into St. Wiggin's fountain where they can start growing up without any thought of their several papas in the bigger pot gobbling them up while they are still in the tender stage.

And as I worked, the idea for the proper treatment of the Joyous Coast plate came to mind, I think. At least an arrangement came to mind which I think may lend itself through over simplification to the compressing of some salient points into a design which is difficult to handle if one is determined not to have the thing too busy.

At the moment it seems to me it might be well to use the layout employed in the Grandpere plate to cover the subject. The portrait of Pierre Emmanuel Grandhomme, holding the cotton bowl, might dominate the thing, with Oakland at the bottom, Beaufort on the left center and Chahmere or whatever they now call the place at the top. This would leave the side to the right of the portrait vacant for a cartouche and for a dab of historical detail in script.

I shall juggle the thing around a little in my mind and see what I finally come up with. It might be a good idea to get the thing going this summer so its release will provide publicity for the entire set when autumn is upon us.

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6127

6127

Before folding up my beard tonight, I think I shall be-  
stir myself to take the wool tack off my bed. Last summer  
I didn't, but what with the thermometer now at 9:15 standing  
at 90, it doesn't appear wool is needed to keep me warm what  
hot homes the little tin roof cabins must be these nights.  
One thing is certain, none of the inhabitants are so foolish  
as to be sleeping on wool tacks, and I suppose many of  
them are stretched out on their galleries, and as many of them  
whom I know don't seem to mind the hardness of the bare floor, they  
perhaps are thereby better adjusted to high temperatures than  
those of us who seem to think we must sleep in beds. I notice  
Juanita's children, about 4 and 6, frolic about until  
they are tired at the big house, and then simply catch up on  
their rest by flattening themselves out slap on the concrete  
floor of the area way in the neighborhood of the kitchen. After  
2 or 3 naps on concrete during the day, a sleep on the wooden  
floor of the cabin gallery would perhaps strike one as  
downy indeed.

The in-coming mail has resumed a more measured course,  
although what comes in is of scant interest. It  
seems to me there were a couple of pieces in today's post for  
enclosure herewith but if time presses, don't bother to  
explore them, as they are of no moment and may as well be  
tossed into the trash as into a file.

The recorded talking Book topics for June came to hand the  
other day and I found little in it of interest. I did order from  
it the listing of Douglas S. Freeman's volume V of Washington,  
which is said to carry that gentleman's career from 1777 to 1783.  
I find it a happy circumstance that James Malone should  
be doing his Jefferson at the same time Freeman is doing  
his Washington, with the Malone opus just about one step ahead  
in time, so that a reading of Jefferson prepared the way very  
neatly for the succeeding volume of the Freeman biography.  
With comparatively few characters in American history receiving  
such exhaustive studies, it is a happy coincidence that  
these two Virginians, so distinctive in character and so intimately  
associated in their revolutionary activities, should thus  
be set forth piece meal in this fashion, giving the student  
a splendid opportunity to get twice as good a view of each,  
thanks to the double efforts exerted by their two biographers  
at about the same time.

But now I must attack the tack, and fold up my beard  
regardless in spite of the chance of sleep until the night has  
cooled a little.....

6128

6128

Wednesday, June 10th, 1953.

Memorandum:

I think I mis-dated yesterday's memo, which doesn't  
matter, but I think today's date line is correct.

Dates do make a difference in the general scheme of  
things but the continuing heat pattern has a way of making  
the calendar seem inconsequential at the moment. In short,  
the heat continues and as we are without the gentle breezes  
from the Gulf, one minds it the more. Thank heavens I had  
sense enough to divest my bed of the wool tack. Eventually  
I ought to be able to get much more effective reaction to  
electrically stirred air currents tonight.

xxxxxxx

Clemence came to see me this afternoon. She had in  
mind planting some butterfly lilies, banana plants and crepe myrtle.  
She is impatient to get her garden going. I told her  
she could have anything she wanted but if she had good sense  
she would wait until January or February to fiddle with the  
items she enumerated. Besides, I pointed out the beauty  
of water hyacinths, embryo palms and gold fish, and  
she compromised with her original desires.

The clerk told me there was a telephone call for her  
from Chicago yesterday. As she has no relatives there,  
one might assume it may have had something to do with  
somebody's interest, stimulated by the Look article. But  
I believe there is nothing in the article to indicate where  
in Louisiana she lives. The clerk told the operator he  
would have to see for Clemence and the Chicago  
caller said he would telephone on Thursday instead of  
waiting. Clemence said she hadn't the slightest idea  
as to identity of the person and that she could not imagine  
why anyone should be calling her from way off yonder.

There were three or four men to dinner today, business  
people for the most part, but there was one R. B. I. who  
was making another around regarding Buck Brown. Poor Buck  
is still lost and probably hasn't the slightest idea any  
one would be looking for him. As the agent remarked, the



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Government is checking on Buck's whereabouts because he has failed to put in an appearance for his Army physical examination under rules concerning the Draft, and yet all this investigation goes on to track him down with the full realization that after he has been located and given his physical examination, the Army is bound to reject him. But sticking to the letter of the law seems to be one of the watch-words of R. B. I., and so the search, covering months of effort, goes on, although it is obvious to everyone who knows Buck that once they catch up with him for the Army, the military will turn him out before he gets in.

As the weeks of April and May slid along, I intended asking long before this if, by any chance, you had heard from Fran R. along the latter part of March. I so hope she is finding the road a little smoother as the days slip along.

In today's post came a couple of pages from a book, as clipped and forwarded by Dora who enclosed a little note which I shall enclose herewith. You will notice he makes reference to tear sheets, as possibly being obtainable from the publisher. I pray you to disregard this matter, for I have adequate copies of the article as does Clemence. Besides, telephoning a concern of this type would undoubtedly engaged one in hours of mix-up and if a letter is required, it will be as easy for Dora to write as anyone.

In the gardening department, I continue dipping out ample supplies of water against the current drought, and vegetation responds wonderfully. The white simnias, whose seed came from your true hand, are particularly impressive, with each blossom being about 4 inches in diameter. Where they appear, as at the base of the sun dial, in beds exclusively white, they seem wonderfully modernistic, while those which come into flower among the velvety reds, purples, oranges and yellows somehow contrive to give inordinate value to everything in their neighborhood.

Clemence told me this morning that she had attended with Mrs. Altamont, or some such name in Matchit ches. The latter had just returned from Corpus Christi where at some tea she had met Nina who had told her that her husband had taken up his residence at Baton Rouge where his family has interests. Nobody seemed to know if Nina planned moving to Baton Rouge although she did mention an impending trip in that direction. And now I splash through a shower and then fold forthwith.....

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6130

Thursday, June 11th, 1953.  
Memorandum:

How nice to find the fat envelope containin your lovely letter of Saturday, plus the reproductions. To say that the former, with its reference to a certain anniversary, filled me with delight scarcely covers the fact, and the thrillness of the arrival of the prints is so perfect that I am impressed by the co-incidence, which I shall speak about further along.

You ask about the Maddy Suydam name appearing in the cut. I approve heartily. Hastings House would not object, I feel quite sure, but even if they ever should on other subjects, they couldn't very well on Maddy or other Melrose designs, since they know that Suydam did much sketching here, that Lyle had many originals and that it is more than probable that we have as many originals of the same sketch as ever came to their use, and so that point is to be dismissed without further thought.

I know not what Manhattan prices might be on having a cut of this type made but since Manhattan prices except in high competitive matters, such as Macy versus Wimbles, the rates usually run rather high. In case you are quote a figure much in excess of five dollars, you might let me ask Charles Cunningham for a quotation, as supplied by whatever house serves the Matchitoches times. I think such a cut as you have in mind could be applied at around five dollars, and so with that tentative figure as something to go by, let me know how things turn out, and if it seems wise to get a quotation from Charles, just let me know what dimensions you have in mind and I shall skip into town with the photograph you had made of the end papers, and get a quotation from his source of supply.

I noted particulars regarding meandering students and I am hoping that by now, they are all "put" for the season. The automotive situation ought to be helpful too, all around, and may it be so in the days ahead.

And may I say thanks for the M. J. Morrow name, with which I was quite unacquainted until you set me straight.



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and speaking of Mr. Murrow reminds me that I heard Rebecca West on one of his "This I Believe" programs the other night, and she mentioned her father or grandfather as having hailed from Russia, which I did not know before. Does one assume from this the family may have suffered from pogroms in Romanoff Russia. Of this I had never heard before Miss West spoke on the A. Roscoe Murrow program.

But let me hasten on to tell you how timely is the advent of the elegant collection of glossy prints. In the same letter mentioning Mrs. Stirling's forthcoming trip to Minneapolis, Mrs. Williams of that place writes that many people scheduled to hear her may well want to invest in a plate. She asks the regular price, although she has ordered two or three from me in the past, and asks me if it would be alright if she mentions the availability of the plate from me to her friends.

I have responded forthwith, congratulating her on her thoughtful gesture of honoring Mrs. Stirling in Minneapolis by having her encounter many of her plates when she meets various people attending her lecture. This somewhat stretches the Williams idea, but the groundwork of her letter is sufficient for me to landscape the setting a little. And so I have written my congratulations to her and have said that I shall be glad to cooperate in any way I can to further her project and that if she will advise me by air mail, I shall send along a few dozen plates so she may have them for her friends before Mrs. Stirling arrives so that the entire business may be transacted in the nature of a surprise to the lady. It is here that the lovely prints made their bow, for since they are to hand, it will be a very pleasant, and perhaps advantageous gesture on my part to send a glossy along for the publicity that will attend the Stirling appearance, and a plate thus reproduced will be as telling for our side as, say, a likeness of the speaker, and since it will show the subject matter to be handled, will perhaps be rendering as entertaining reading in the newspapers. Thus your thoughtfulness in getting these developed and sent to me is most perfectly coincidental in the timing and again, for the billionth time, I congratulate you whole heartedly.

It has been such a lovely day, in spite of the heat, just having your lovely letter and all to hand.....

0313

6132

Friday, June 12th, 1953.

Memorandum: The weather remains hot and dry and the grass in the cotton patch is non-existent.

Before harvest time starts 8 weeks hence, I am hoping the water in the woods, some place back in the red River region, will have evaporated and the field hands may be stirred from their momentary leisure to get some cypress to replace the yucca gallery supports. Gradually the roof sags in sympathy with the bases of the pillars, and it's just a question of time whether the supports will get too far ahead in their decline with the result that the yucca roof will crack open at the seams. Let's all hold the thought that restoration beat ruin to it.

You will enjoy the letters from Monks Corner. Surely it's a great pity La Storm doesn't write more frequently, she turns out such interesting material when she gets around to set her hand to it.

I know not why it seems so much farther from Loisi ana to California than to South Carolina but it does. There seems to be something a little cockeyed about the prolonged sojourn out there, too. Obviously it is not precisely the way La Storm would have it. And besides, while California is ever so lovely, the Carolina low country seems to mean much to the elder of the two ladies, and one can really understand her obvious lack of enthusiasm about being gone so long.

Perhaps during August letters will flow along a bit more readily, although, for my part, I shall always pen mine as though being written for both to see, which tends to put a curb on some natural expressions of sympathy for the elder lady and her seemingly enforced exile so far from her home and gardens. How different would be the impending plans if, say, little Miss Lee had been her nearest kinsman.



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There was an interruption tonight just as Edward Moscoe Murrow was signing off, but I was conscious of him saying something about an absence of several weeks for a vacation I sometimes wish Mr. Murrow would express himself a little more vehemently on certain matters on which he reports but does not throw in any observations as to the presence of lamentable elements, as in certain McCarthy doings. At times he seems to be following the Eisenhower pattern of ignoring the evils which are possessed of such dreadful potentials. Sometimes it almost seems as though he is setting forth the Biblical line: "Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's," with such a degree of objectivity that he almost seems to be giving tacit approval to something perfectly outrageous, which most certainly is not his intention. Perhaps the Eric Sevareid method of giving over half the 15 minute period to a recitation of the news events, followed by the last half of the period devoted to an editorial treatment of one of the points, covering the larger implications rather thoroughly, is a more satisfactory method. For sometimes it has seemed to me that when sheer facts are rattled off at too great a rate, one comes to the end of the 15 minute period with a mental blur that leaves the memory of the items reported without any clear place in one's mind as to their values.

The warm nights have tempted me to spend a little longer at reading, and I am currently exploring "Finland Forever" by Hudson Strod. In our blistering weather, Finland in its geographic situation as regards the Arctic Circle seems as appealing as a Newsreel in July, running ski jumping current events of six months back. I had expected a secretary to pass this ay, to or from the movie, but as none has showed up, I shall send Kay's letter along with la Storm, but would ask that you jot down the North Hollywood address for me so I may make use of it, possibly before the lady reaches her destination. I thought the Bluff situation would be clearer if both letters were read at the same time.....

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6133

Sunday, June 14th, 1953.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your week end letter in Saturday's post.

In the same mail came the large map from Dora, --the one which you had acquired, and touched upon in your letter. We shall keep it among our treasures so we may eventually explore it a bit together.

In the same post came another envelope from Dora containing what I take to be Louisiana Purchase stamps. I haven't read the note accompanying them, but if that is what they turn out to be, I shall eventually send them along to you as I have no use for them.

There were quite a few other pieces of mail, none of them of any particular interest, I think, and some of which I didn't get around to open, as from Beth Mead, for example, whose letters never inspire me to rush into a response.

It goes without saying that I was delighted to have the Audubon clipping. It certainly contains particulars one wouldn't be likely to run across off hand. An interruption prevented me from finishing the article about the Bakewells and all, and I am looking forward to having another go at it on the morrow.

Your ask about the mille fleurs tapestry appearing in little Miss Clemence's boudoir. These colorful bits are made of black sateen or some such material on which Clemence has pasted flowers she has cut out from catalogues with which I have supplied her from time to time. Wayside gardens of Menton, Rio, Jackson and Perkins of Newark, New York, are both notables in the field of excellently printed colored catalogues, and Clemence loved everyone I would toss in her direction. The mille fleurs seems to be her own idea. The miracle of her execution is the fact that she could get the things to stick with paste and yet not get any, --not a drop or a smudge of the paste on the sateen background, --a notable feat in itself.



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and while I think of it, let me respond to your inquiry regarding Alton Johnson. He comes to see me now and then, sometimes bringing a sister or two with him. He is pretty busy hoeing the family crop at the moment, but tells me he is practicing a little at carving animals. I promised to get him a little statue of the Blessed Martin but I have neglected doing so as yet. He had in mind doing a likeness of good old Martin, and I suppose in modified form, it wouldn't be too difficult. It might be an item that would appeal to pilgrims, if he develops any aptitude for that medium. He has been devoting himself recently to turning out a other miniature automobile for another contest, being put on by General Motors, I believe. As he won first prize in their contest last year, it would seem remarkable if he should hit twice in a row, but whether he wins or not, he enjoys the trying.

I don't know if he has done enough to merit a story as yet, but the next time any civilized photographers pass this way, I think I shall take them calling, with cameras, on the Johnsons, for a few shots might come in handy eventually in contemplating an article on artistic manifestations among people of color in the cane river country.

I never knew the heat to discourage pilgrims completely, but I really had a break yesterday, except for the winks who blew in at 6 o'clock in the morning. They came to pick up a new car J. A. had ordered for them. They saw the matchitoches plate for the first time and wanted one but didn't have any money. I liked and said there weren't any available any way, except the one in the African house which they saw. So far as I am concerned they can sit on a tack. One of these days the whole possession, - or at least the whole batch of children, will be dumped out at this bend of the river for a vacation, I suppose. That seems to be an inevitable bridge but the crossing of it will not be a tickle. I promised "widely scattered showers" for the week end but all we got was lots of static. The minnias, loving sunshine, are getting their fill, and as I give them copious libations nightly, they are putting on a floral display that is as impressive as is the sight of the individual plants which really are getting out of hand, now that they are beginning to pass the 4 foot mark.

The tender leaf of birthday time is standing me in such good stead these nights.

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6136

Monday, June 15th, 1953.

Memorandum:

I was altogether delighted today when I discovered a stem atop one of the banana plants, - the stem perhaps a couple of feet in length, - bending gracefully groundward, the end of it heavy with the bulge of an impending blossom. As I recall, the banana blossoms usually begin putting in an appearance about the middle of July. The mildness of the season might account for this premature unfolding of the blossom, but in the present case, wherein the plant itself has undergone two up-sets, it seems odd indeed that it should have blossomed at all this year. Usually the transplanting of a plant of this sort, - perhaps 18 or 20 feet in height, would discourage any flowering at all in the season following its transplanting. Add to this fact the further discouragement of the stalk itself having been broken off by the big wind early in May, - a breaking off of the stem perhaps 4 or 5 feet from the top where the blossom usually puts out, and one wonders at the miracle of this first of this year's banana crop to give evidence that neither up-rooting or injury can prevent its impulse to bring forth fruit.

The heat continues unabated and, according to discussions concerning live stock, it seems the Texas pasture has been so eliminated by the drought that vast stocks of cows and sheep are being thrown on the market in the Lone Star State in such quantities as to depress prices to their lowest ebb in years, although I know not if this lowering of prices at the inception point of processing meat is in any way reflected over the counters to retail buyers.

Your friend, Beth Williams Cloutier, telephoned me in the morning, asking if she might come down in the afternoon. She might. She brought armfuls of data having to do with the Rudhomme genealogy which we went over in part together. She has in mind photostating many maps, land grants, etc., and reproducing many coats-of-arms, and the whole slapped into a book. Her genealogical tables are complete and all other material assembled. All she wants me to do is to write a glorification of the Rudhomme family and its superiority of their way of life in Southern plantation ways of living, - a mere 125 page symposium which she will incorporate in her collection of tables. After that, all right.



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she wants me to do is to write article and see they get printed for both the Times Picayune magazine section and the Shreveport Times. The lady is obviously wacky which is well known to everyone, but the curious part of her nature is that when she is high voiced and bogged down on some point clearly cock-eyed, she is much less disordered mentally than when in calm and reasonable tones, she demonstrates that her mind is not flustered by excitement but is pursuing a seemingly reasonable course that, if subjected to analysis, it even more out of line with reason than when she is sounding off on a strident high pitch.

Before she got through with her sitting, she told me quite frankly the reason motivating her to undertake this tremendous work is solely in order that when her moron son, aged 12, reaches 30, he will be able to lay his hand on the volume and demonstrate by the truth in its genealogical tables that he is just as good or better than those who may think his mind doesn't coordinate as it should. What a reason for her to write such a book, or rather to accumulate such a mass of material and for me to write the book for her. How marvelous is the variety of patterns which can be formed for humandissatisfaction and unhappiness.

In spite of the continued heat, the pilgrim business runs along undiminished. I was bothered until first dark by their comings and goings. At one point during the height of the afternoon brilliance of the sun, two gentlemen appeared, one acting as spokesman, gave a his name and stated that Dallas was his home, following which he presented the other gentleman whose residence was Japan. I had not heard of this town in Texas, but nothing ever surprises me as to what unexpected letter combination they can draw forth in the lands beyond the Sabine. It turned out, however, that the second gentleman was not from Texas but from the real Japan, and naturally I put forth every effort to make the tour pleasant for one coming from such a distance. He was particularly interested in plants and was delighted to find nandina which he says flourishes some 2 feet high in his garden at home, making the local bushes of 8 or 10 feet seem wonderfully opulent to him.

At the night advances and I must do a bit of desk work before divesting myself of my raiment and collapsing in my arm chair. I turn on the reading machine as I consume no end of tender leaf ice tea which seems like such a life saver these nights of unusual warmth. My mint bed is thriving, and a sprig plucked from the local garden seems perfect for putting the finishing flavor touch on the tender leaf....

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Tuesday, June 16th, 1953.

Memorandum:

The heat continues and cloudless skies are reported as far as the weather bureau can scan the skies.

The pilgrims were too numerous today, and each succeeding group seemed dumber than that preceding.

There was one group from Oklahoma, substantial middle class citizens who apparently were possessed of more education than culture and all of them, perhaps 4 or 5 females and a couple of males who seemed curious about everything there was to be seen and capable of comprehending a mighty little of anything.

When I said goodbye to them at the front gate, one of the ladies said: "Several times during our tour, you have frequently used the word ante bellum. Would you mind telling us what that means."

Really, I did mind, it seemed so useless, but I accommodated Oklahoma and was glad to turn to South Louisiana which turned out to be even thicker.

There was some sort of a scuffle at the honkey tonk during the morning, in which Alphonse fired his revolver twice at Leroy, who is a negro who may have figured in these pages before. Leroy courted Bertha Bluff while Bluff was in the Shreveport Charity Hospital for several months last summer. Following Bluff's return, Leroy had to find himself another companion, and eventually Bluff and Bertha Bluff who had been living next to Arenbourg, betook themselves to Little River to live atop the Indian mound. But now their domestic bliss is finally shattered, with Bluff planning to return to Cane River and Bertha Bluff deciding to take on Leroy, and Leroy unable to take a go with the honkey tonk, although that place seems to



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figure not at all in the domestic mix up, and nobody, including Alphonse, seemed to be able to explain why he had been training his heavy artillery on Leroy. Perhaps it is the heat, which usually produces odd manifestations prior to the getting of religion which never breaks through until August, regardless of impulses and thermometer readings.

The hoeing of cotton seems to be pretty well in hand and I plan to celebrate a bit of arenb urg birthday on the morrow by rounding up several gentlemen of color to help me put the fence in more substantial order against next winter's pressure of cattle, and some other gentlemen to assist me a bit in making life a little easier for some of the "children". It will be too hot to really do as much as one would like, but one must grab at labor whenever it is available, and this seems to be the magical moment.

At the same time, J. A. has finally been persuaded that the pillars supporting the Yucca roof had better be replaced forthwith or else, --and so that ought to be cooking at the same time, so the morrow should be fairly busy.

J. A. says Celeste is on a frolic as guest of Madam General in Baton Rouge, the General himself being in New York. Madam Negard is parked, I believe, in Manuira or some such place.

It is said the ladies will be returning to home base along about Thursday. In the meantime, the nights are comparatively quiet on this bend of the river, although this is due primarily to the fact that the master is out, naturally.

It seems so odd the lady would never suppose that anything by way of responsibility exist so far as the hearth stone is concerned, and since the residence itself arouses little or no reason for her being here, since there is nothing by way of reason for her being here, the big road is alluring and the most is being made of its appeal.

So much for this tirade, and forgive the dullness of same. The postman held out today so tomorrow will probably be a double dip.....

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wednesday, June 17th, 1953.

memorandum: I have been thinking of writing you a long time, but I have been so busy that I have not had time. I have been so busy that I have not had time. I have been so busy that I have not had time.

If the results are satisfactory, any birthday is a success, quite aside from physical expenditures. And today's birthday was a success.

The continuing heat, however, made it a substantial investment in seat for me and a half dozen others, and as the festivities weren't concluded before the setting of today's sun, we shall all be up bright and early for another go round of fence building on the morrow.

There are usually petty annoyances having to do with the Alphonse set up, hinging on the honkey tonk, but those are minor and the tiny mimosa are such a joy in their magnitude that other considerations don't seem to matter much.

And then there is the persimmon situation. Some of the trees have been eradicated by misfortune, but the majority of them are thriving and I suppose I removed two or three bushels of fruit from this year's growth. These would not be plucked normally until October, but in view of the impulse of various marauders from the honkey tonk when the ripening season comes round, and because thoughtlessness might impell some people to snatch at whole limbs of the golden fruit, I have removed it while still in the green stage, thereby giving back to the tree an opportunity to beget itself into greater strength, being thus relieved of the necessity of bringing the fruit to its peak of perfection.

.....The end of the world



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I am enchanted to report that the fruit this year seems to be the finest yet, and, if permitted to come to full maturity would have quite out done anything at melrose on amplitude.

The pears are bearing heavily, too, but I am removing the greatest measure of the potential crop, too, in order that the strength may go back into the tree.

Tomorrow I am anticipating a line fence dispute with Alphonse but I think that will be of secondary interest since J. A. has already eyed the Arenbourg line, and as his cotton crop on the east opposite side of the Bermuda road, is governed somewhat by the fence line on the west side of the road which is "us-es, I think I know which way the dispute will end, and I think we shall not be the losers. In the first place, J. A. owns an undivided 5th of the Alphonse property, having purchased the rights of a disgruntled heir, and besides, he is quite cross with the honkey tonk for some of its recent demonstrations of tomfoolery, and what with the weather being hot and Mr. Henry inclined toward impatience, the final position of the line fence, as already set forth in a brief conversation with him today will undoubtedly settle the matter abruptly to everyone's satisfaction except the A. Mettroyer section.

The post continues thin, meaning it will be fat one of these days. But I am glad of the freedom from desk work which this respite affords. Pilgrims continue to fluctuate and they have recently had a way of blowing in at just about the time the secretaries turn up, and it has been nice to know that while the pilgrims haven't been capable of assimilating much, the secretaries haven't been vastly needed.

I am reading a book I would recommend to nobody, - per, haps because it contains a symposium of sketches about origin of political terms and customs which probably most people who would pick up a book entitled "A Book about Politics by George Stimson, already would know most of the points covered and would no where know where to look up the pertinent facts concernin them that may have slipped the memory. It is a very good book, but I have never read it. I have read of dubious interest, one on the heels of the other. But let's chase it off to the heat, which, I must admit, I am not minding, especially as at the end of each day I can look forward with so much satisfaction to your little chat, and, thanks to little Miss Lee, a brimming decanter of iced tender leaf.....

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Thursday, June 17th, 1953.

Memorandum: The best laid plans of mice and men" went by the boards today as something unexpected developed in the local water system, and it as a case of the proverbial "all hands to the pump" which put plans for re-fencing Arenbourg by the boards for the balance of the week.

Fortunately whatever went wrong with the water system did not cut off our supply of water but some sort of a thing developed that resulted in a flooding of all the garden from the big oak to the public road, --a spot where many of the larger Chinese magnolias are situated, and in view of the prolonged heat and drought, this young lake that developed during the night was a great blessing to the vegetation in that quarter.

When the oasis was discovered, it was decided that no end of local strong arms should be set busy digging up pipes and generally making the place look like a Confederate breast works hastily thrown up for some unseen advancing Army. But by late afternoon whatever was out of kilter was in place again, and everybody was happy that they could knock off in all good time to get rigged up for the several festivities scheduled for tonight and in anticipation of other frolicsomen enterprises pending for tomorrow, which, as you know, is the big holiday for the negroes in this area. And so with Friday as a holiday and Saturday a getting over of a holiday and Sunday more getting over and more holiday, nothing will be done at Arenbourg before Monday.

Although the major portion of the people were engaged in building and demolishing earth works, there were a few who could be set to other lines of endeavor, and so I made the most of the opportunity to secure a couple of them, --Mitchell, the Axe, and McKinley Brown, to assist me at Arenbourg, and what with up and down the road several times during the day, --the local thermometer being over 100, I shall not have to be rocked to sleep tonight.



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I saw Celeste for a few moments at the post office this morning. She reported a "darling time in Baton Rouge. it seems the S. G. Enrys, both senior and junior, have such dainty houses, "lovely rose color brick" of which we have heard before, and marvelous pink tile baths, of which we have also heard, although we may not have heard anything by way of response to this, that, or the other thing, in letters going forward during the past few years. Perfection doesn't manifest itself in every direction with each individual, and so if the house is perfectly darling, dainty and divine, one really should expect more.

It seems to me there is a dab of letters, some not so recent, which might be enclosed in this letter or tucked into another envelope. I shall try to hunt them up in the morning.

Tonight I am going to look for nothing except the tankard of ice tea which, since birthday time, has been such an unfailling source of pleasure to me. And somehow there is something about the cool coloring of the tile on which the little black grandpas appear, that they seem a perfect counterpart to the whole business of the Tender Leaf section.

I was interested to learn that the ladies next door got away Sunday a short time after the dinner hour when a telephone call came through for them regarding the Monday funeral somewhere or other in South Louisiana. It is said, and I believe it, that they telephoned me forthwith to advise me they would not be home for supper. But I must have been in the garden, as I did not respond to the telephone, and they were too much in a hurry to pass this way before leaving. When, when 7 o'clock came, I assumed they were delayed a little in getting back from Sunday movies in town, - a custom for almost every Sabbath, and so I sat from 7 until after 10 on the tiered gallery. I could stand the three hour wait, as my time is not so precious and my calendar not so important with "must" dates, so that the two minutes they saved by not getting word to me provided me with rest that I welcomed.

I have had but four showers today, and so I think I shall dash through the fifth one now, and then to the reading machine and the Tender Leaf, and each sip of the latter will be the nicer just because.....

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Friday, June 19th, 1953.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Wednesday air mail in today's post, but I am so sorry to learn of your illness and sincerely hope you haven't ventured out too soon. Colds in hot weather are always seem doubly difficult, a annoying and somehow have a way of lingering on to such lengths. I am holding the thought that your recuperation was as speedy as the surprising turn-about that children so often effect in their illnesses and that you are really giving yourself a breather during the balance of this week.

That you should have had visitors at just the time you were feeling at your lowest is certainly as upsetting, it would seem, as the affliction of physical enervation. Let us hope you don't have to go through a y more of them this season and that from vacation to school this a turn may be made in a single jump that will pass you by completely.

I know the young lady living next door must be as happy as a clam, and how nice that the young man during his absence mastered the tongue of the country where he has been stationed. It will be so nice for both of them in years to come to be able to share that knowledge together.

The blistering heat continues and June 19th was a perfect day for all the negroes so far as their inclinations were concerned. There was a baseball game down at Boyce, - attended by the local numbers via a school bus for transportation, to see the home team perform, and tonight there is a movie at the honkey-tonky and some kind of a swing out further up the road. I suppose I shall have ample reports on the morrow. All of my secretaries must have attended the baseball game, as none of them showed up here. The mail was fairly heavy, as it would be on an all out holiday, but fortunately, some of my aspiring secretaries, bent on rounding up show fare, passed this way, and so "by main force and awkwardness", I was able to get through one letter. The balance can wait until the morrow.

The other day, while turning through an old folio, two or three films dropped out which I shall enclose with this letter.



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I haven't the vaguest notion if they were mine or note and I can't imagine the identity of the people but I thought I would send them along regardless. If you find them of an unrecognizable nature, just chuck them in the trash.

Pilgrims - friends of Celeste, - came at 5 and lingered until nearly an hour and a half. By the time I got things pushed around it was time to listen to Charles Collingwood for Edward Roscoe Morrow, and then it was I learned about the death of the Rosenwalds, or whatever the name of the atom spies may have been. I never heard much about that trial until it reached its aftermath, and know nothing about its merits. I assume the Supreme Court had no intention of engineering the Rosenbergs to their death unless there had been a pretty tight case, and, without knowing anything about it, I see no difference if they were guilty whether they were tried under an ante or a post atom law. Still, I never did believe in executions.

Of all the fiasco tom foolery I ever heard of, the present Korean business seems to take the cake. The killing part of it is that we seem to have a tiger by the tail, being unable either to hang on or let go. There have been occasions in my life when I have thought how wonderfully to be desired would be dropping through the floor. I'll bet Mr. Eisenhower is wishing the whole Korean peninsula might suddenly sink into the sea.

And while discussing unpleasant matters, let me remark that the likeness of Joe McCarthy came to my attention on the cover of the copy of Look which you had so thoughtfully put in the mail for me to round out the Clemence data. It was so kind of you to get a copy for me, and, as I look back as to the probable date it was sent, it must have required your attention when you were feeling too pert. Clemence came to see me again today, asking if she might copy the Jane River Kobelin. She might. The original grows prettier with each turn of the sun, for it continues to fade, and the more elusive the pattern, the more deliciously appealing it becomes.

And speaking of the Kobelin puts us on the back gallery, and tonight, what with a lovely moon, it is going to be ever so pleasant there. It is true that the thermometer at 9 o'clock stands at 90 degrees, but what with a good fan whirling noiselessly, a dab of Mozart and Strauss and Peter Illyovitch to gladden the heart, and a carafe of tender Leaf along side, and perfect facilities for mental telepathy, my next hour is going to be ever so pleasant as my thoughts travel in the general direction of little Miss Lee.

I am so hopeful that your impending week end may be freed from colds and from people and that you, too, find an opportunity to grab off a couple of leisure hours just for you.....

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Sunday, June 21st, 1953.

Memorandum:

Frankly, it came to me as no surprise this morning when the weather bureau announced that summer would arrive along about noon. As a matter of fact, it seemed to me summer had actually put in an appearance about a month ago.

I suppose the thermometer must have registered something over a hundred all day, but it seemed much warmer, what with no a breath of air stirring.

Some of the Mulalove family, wealthy pecan people in the Shreveport area, put in an appearance along about 3 this afternoon. They inquired as to the charge for a tour. I told them I should give them some substantial sum for putting their foot in the big road on such a day. I felt like adding that they might have their head examined, too.

As the forecast for Monday is continued fair and hot, I do not mind if the week end scuffles has already precluded any possibility of fence building. Mitchell, the axe, was arrested last night on three or four counts, --obstructing traffic, driving in a drunken condition, resisting arrest and the Lord knows what all.

Several of the other strong arms, intended for fence building tomorrow, were also reported out of circulation tonight, so I suppose about Tuesday or Wednesday will see us really getting the week's work started.

I find it an interesting fact that Mitchell, the axe, who has the rarest sense of co-ordination in handling an axe, has no sense whatsoever in driving a car. He has a tumbled down one which is the cause of getting him put in jail about once a month, primarily because he simply can't learn to drive the thing, and never does he drive a plantation tractor. J.M. starts off youngsters at tractor operation when they are about 14 years old and they seem to slide into the thing readily enough although many of them have never been behind the wheel of an automobile. But Mitchell who has passed for running a car for 20 years cannot drive a tractor across the road without wrecking it on the way, --and all that in spite of the fact that his sense of co-ordination with an axe is just as miraculous as was Babe Ruth's with a bat.



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I got off additional letters to the Library of Congress, American Foundation for the Blind and so on regarding the recording on talking books of the broadcasts of invitation to learning. In future recommendations of books which we fill out on the Library forms, I think we should include invitation to learning, and if we get as far as we do with our Saxon-Frost recommendations, we shall have much to be gratified about.

Several people passing this way have expressed delight at the sight of the zinnia department. The color of the flowers is really entrancing but the color of all zinnia blossoms are more or less along the same lines. What really impresses one with this year's crop is the height the plants are attaining. They are now well over my shoulder and from the looks of them, they are likely to grow another foot or two. Their amplitude is really wonderful, but so will be the confusion in their ranks when one of these days a big breeze comes along and tangles them all into a riot of entangled loveliness.

If memory serves me correctly, Carolyn was scheduled to appear at -elrose along about last Wednesday. Of course nothing has been heard from her and I should be not at all surprised if she blew in any day unannounced or perhaps finally got around to this bend of the river a year hence. Isn't it a pity that one so gifted has to be possessed of such undependability that everything on the positive side is cancelled by equally strong elements on the negative.

The more I hear about that currently popular book, "Desiree", the more curious I am to see how it is contrived. People as far apart on the intellectual ladder as Celeste and Ora combine to express vast entertainment through the medium of its pages, and I have come to the conclusion it must have struck one of those unique chords as did Gone with the Wind, embracing some quality that makes it equally appealing to everyone. Brahma is said to have remarked that he would rather have written the Blue Danube than all the things he ever composed, and the "Desiree" and Gone with the Wind volumes must somehow fit into the same unique bracket musically that the Blue Danube does in music, which, I realize I have used the word music for the printed things instead of literary, as intended.

But that fuzzy mental condition is illustrative of my slipperiness and after a quick shower and a bumper of rinds leaf, I shall make no effort to avoid resting my eyes forthwith.....

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Poem of Birthday of Louis XI

Monday, June 22nd, 1953.  
Memorandum:

How nice to find your fat letter of the 18th in this morning's post. Apparently the mails, at long last, are getting back on schedule.

As for the cut, it strikes me was being elegant, and I think the size delectable. I can readily understand how the Suydam name wouldn't be of any consequence in this reduced size and its absence makes no difference at all. Those who know their Suydam will recognize it instantly and those who do not know him wouldn't register anything if the name did appear.

And thank for telling me of the news from across the Rhine. Somehow I have a feeling we are entering upon a down grade that will increase the momentum of unhappiness as time marches on. I think we have pondered on various aspects of this situation in the past, coming to the conclusion that any vital turn for the better would have to originate in the person of the one caught in this unpleasant set-up, and since the emotional fabric is such that no inner change is possible, the shadows will deepen toward night from here on out. It is worth the effort to explode globules of sunshine where their unexpected presence brings forth a noticeable response, for the effort in such cases is justified in that the one for whom the kindling of stars is designed can get a measure of uplift from their burst of momentary glory. But in our present problem child, I feel there is no capacity under present circumstances for her to appreciate such promises, and thus the effort and the exploding fragment of sunshine produces nothing to anyone's advantage.

I was indeed shocked by the news in your letter announcing the death of Douglas Freeman, for I had heard nothing about it. I am so thankful he finished the fifth volume of the Washington biography for with it, I think he has summed up the major outline of the Washington career that we have need so long. The next volumes, I suppose, would have been devoted to the Presidency, and let us hope that as these Presidential years are being touched on by so many other capable historians, such as Dumas Malone in his Jefferson study, we shall



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Ruman Malone in his Jefferson study, we shall not miss the balance of the study as much as though we had failed to get him as far as we did. I have noted before that Freeman sometimes stressed the day-to-day military aspects almost beyond interest for the casual reader, and I wonder if that might have been the case in the Presidential volumes, had they been written.

As it stands, --these five volumes, they represent for me a striking parallel to the unfinished Gilbert Stuart portrait of Washington, --and I believe I have a large print of it somewhere here, -- which, in spite of the fact that the background hasn't been sketched in, and everything save the head is inclined to be rather unfinished, still the composition is one of the finest extant and perhaps even more appealing and valuable to people because it came to us precisely in the state it did.

I invite your attention to the enclosures. The letter speaks for itself and, for the most part, seems to state viewpoints to which neither you nor I subscribe. The poem, --there may be two, as I forgot to find out if the lines on both sides dealt with the same piece, is one that came to hand unexpectedly when I was examining an old note book in which I had tucked some verses that appealed to me a couple of decades back. If there be two, I am talking about the one entitled "Birthday of Louis, or some such. I can't recall where I found it but I think in some chance magazine, something as unexpected as, perhaps, the Saturday Evening Post. I suppose it was contrasting balances that struck me as pretty well in shaping up a composite picture of any age long gone, an age which, in spite of improvements, continues now and then to reflect itself in our contemporary world. I think you will like the poem as a forceful bit of writing. Anyway I send it along for your delectation. If it is about played out and needs re-typing for any reason, you might make a duplicate for me, although I don't need it at all and shall merely slip it into some notebook or other, as I shall not get around to read it on my own hook.

The Phillipine lilies are altogether out of hand. Glance at some doorway within your view and you will probably estimate its height at 7 or 8 feet, and then consider the lilies, some of whose stems have attained a height of 12 feet, and the buds not yet in sight. Step ladders are handy and it looks as though I would need them along in August.

And again thanks for the grand letter and for giving me an opportunity to get a pre-view of the Y

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Tuesday, June 24th, 1953.

Memorandum:

I neglected to return the proof of the yucca out in yesterday's memo, and I shall do so in this letter if I can readily place hand on it at mailing time.

The fact is that I shall be busy on the morrow between sun up and post time and I may have to give so much time to the line-fence controversy that I may neglect correspondence a little.

The sizzling heat continues unabated, but nothing daunts the pilgrims, so I have been on the jump, both up and down the road and all about the place as well.

There was an odd twist of fate yesterday in the case of one of the madam's old friends, Mrs. Weis, or Matchitoches. She has a 40 year old daughter with the mentality of a child of three and has always been something of an unpredictable quantity whenever Mrs. Weis appeared. The name of Mrs. Weis is Flora, and in view of the daughters somewhat strange activities, Lyle and I were want not to call the child by her right name, Elizabeth, but rather that of Rauna, for somehow mother and daughter were never apart and Flora and Rauna seemed such a natural appellation.

Mrs. Weis lives in town opposite the Knipmeyers. Yesterday morning she drove into the business district and leaving Rauna in the car, stepped out to enter the bank. On the street she met a Mrs. Lucker who, on occasion, when Flora has been ill or called away from town, has kept Rauna who has great confidence in her. On the street Mrs. Weis and Mrs. Lucker met, and Mrs. Weis remarked that Elizabeth was "over yonder" in the car, and then, placing

her hand on Mrs. Lucker's shoulder, remarked that she felt so strange, and thereupon slumped to the street. Dr. Bath who has an office in the bank building was summoned. He pronounced Mrs. Weis dead.

And thus the one person in the world who could manage Elizabeth had been acquainted with her whereabouts a split second before, and thus what might have been a strange hour or perhaps half day for Elizabeth, was carried through immediately as a most fatal consequence, and she could be taken under Mrs.



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Mrs. Tucker's wing, tanks to the fact that she was the only person who chanced, at that important moment, to know of Elizabeth's whereabouts.

But oddly enough, Mrs. Tucker did not feel up to acquainting Elizabeth with her mother's death, for she knew that Elizabeth adored the lady doctor. According to Worsley was summoned and Elizabeth taken care of.

I have always felt Mrs. Weis was so wrong in keeping Elizabeth at home instead of lodging her in an institution, for Elizabeth had been in a private place once or twice and adored the life, where everybody among the inmates was of her own mentality and great fun could be had by all.

But Mrs. Weis had promised her husband on the latter's deathbed, that she would always keep Elizabeth and she kept her vow. But anyone living in the world of human, neighborly contacts, can scarcely keep a mentally deficient child at one's elbow and at the same time not inflict her whimsies on the people with whom she comes into contact.

The net result was that Elizabeth was forever upsetting applecarts, and the mother, being so used to her child's carryings-on, never seemed to notice it.

During the war, Stephen had a couple of hours between London and the Philippines to pass by Melrose. We all were naturally interested in what he had to tell. Unannounced Mrs. Weis and Elizabeth put in an appearance just at dinner. On that particular day, Elizabeth's one phrase, repeated at every sound, was

"It aint so, it certainly aint so...."

and that was uttered every time anyone said anything.

And thus as the veneral would try to tell us something about how things were going here and there, Elizabeth would mumble with some volume: "It aint so... none of it aint so...." and nearly drove all of us nuts.

Well, Flora has gone and Fauna remains, and I apologize for this mighty measely letter. Perhaps tomorrow will not be worse.....

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Wednesday, June 24th, 1953.

Memorandum:

We continue to swelter but the heat was tempered from time to time during the afternoon by gentle breezes from the Gulf, hot as blazes, but nevertheless refreshing as is any stir of air, even though it be agenerating as the air about one that is not in motion.

The Arenbourg line fence went into quite a spin, with much discussion between Alphonse and J. H., in which, although present, I had no part, since the exact line seemed to hinge on what Alphonse could remember his grandpa said about where the line was in civil war times. As my own memory of either Grandpa or the civil war was a bit vague, as related to the Arenbourg line, there wasn't much point in participating, and so they settled the matter eventually and a new fence is in place.

The whole scuffle, seemingly, was over two or three feet, one way or the other, but actually what was involved was the fact that the honkey-tonk hasn't sufficient space to operate its baseball diamond without incorporating some of Arenbourg into the general scheme, and naturally my foot was down on that point.

Added to that consideration is a somewhat wacky element that is momentarily making Alphonse feel very unkind toward me. Six months back his wife chanced to be at the post office just as I was mailing some things, including a letter to the basement Book shop. And oddly enough Alphonse's wife asked me if I knew where she could get a copy of children of strangers, as she had heard me about it. I could readily give her the proper New Orleans address and a copy was secured. Twice in as many past weeks, I have learned that several mulattoes, --the half baked variety,--have been reading the book and their reaction has been most unexpected. The servant of one of my friends in town reported to her mistress that the Alphonse metoyers and she herself were all quite mad at me. When asked the reason, she explained that they had all been reading "the book" and that they felt "Mr. F. hasn't treated our race right". There seems to be some sort of a mental mix-up, and although the name of Saxon appears on the novel, they



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know perfectly well that I wrote the book. And then there is another bracket, as the Balthazars, who wouldn't crack the book on a bet, but are perfectly delighted to have the grandpère plate in their homes because "Mr. Lyle made the plates".

One is silly trying to make sense out of such business, but, given such ingredients, and the thermometer over 100, and you can readily imagine how hot things could get when the line fence comes up for discussion.

But all that is behind us and tomorrow is another day. And with the new day comes the replacement of the pillars, front and back, on the Yucca gallery. There are 7 on the south side and 6 on the white garden side, and I might as well say goodbye right now, I suppose, to my fine assortment of zinnias, elephant ears, and butterfly lilies. But the thing to concentrate on is the preservation of Yucca and another year can bring forth its floral decors readily enough if only the building itself is in a substantial state. The roof really needs to be re-shingled, but if one is smart, one points out one vital need at a time, so that once the restoration is undertaken, and something invested in the old building, the next recommendation follows through naturally as a sort of good investment to back up what on the day before has been put in.

I was glad my radio didn't go all quiet on me until after the Charles Hollingwood news cast tonight, for I was interested to learn that the name of Tom Lyons had been withdrawn by the Administration. Surely somebody made a blunder, perhaps it was Secretary McKay, in persuading the President to nominate a man to be Director of Mines, or whatever the job is titled, when that nominee is drawing a \$5,000.00 pension from one of the country's greatest mining concerns and the man himself says he doesn't believe in the law, designed to protect the lives of the miners. This seems to be another indication that the Administration is leaning heavily on the side of "special interests", as described by Mr. Furman in his Washington interview yesterday.

If Yucca isn't in too much of a shambles on Friday, I shall run into town, tooting my radio with me so I can get in touch with the outside world before too much time has elapsed. It is pleasant to be able to report that the reading machine is working just fine. So long as both contraptions don't get out of kilter at the same time, all will be well. And now I turn to said machine and a tall glass of tender leaf while my thoughts continue to flow in the general direction of little Miss Lee.....

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Thursday, June 25th, 1953.

Memorandum:

I should so much enjoy a nice shower, --one from Heaven to cool things off a bit. I should like a mundane one, too, and shall indulge myself a half hour hence.

A flock of carpenters of sorts appeared on my gallery this morning at dawn. I figured Yucca need 13 posts to support the two galleries. They didn't have that many, and so I told them to go ahead with what they had. They replaced three giving on the white garden and six on the front. The job wasn't titanic but they managed to stretch it over a day. I hope they can round up some more posts between now and tomorrow's dawn. If they do, we shall get all the old ones replaced. If they don't, we shall probably have to let the whole thing go for a year or so. The remaining posts are in poor condition but today's replacements will save the Yucca roof from collapsing for a few years regardless, and sometime during the interim, the others may be installed.

They discovered that the bindery requires shorter posts than Yucca and so some of the ones removed from this house were sawed off and placed as supports at the bindery. It's all a little slipshod but the important thing is that Yucca has again been saved and that is the important thing.

I can't remember if I mentioned in yesterday's memo that I had recently run across something about camellias in a most unexpected quarter. In a section of the Stimson "Book About American Politics", a paragraph is given regarding the camellia, the subject being brought up by mention of the "Knights of the White Camellia", founded at Franklin, Louisiana in the late 1860's, and of greater extent in the deep South than the Ku Klux Klan which started off in the same manner, --an attempt to bring order out of the political and economic chaos of the Reconstruction days.

Mr. Stimson says the camellia is an evergreen plant of which the tea plant is of the same genus. He says in 1704 it was

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described by the moravian priest, Father George Joseph Camelle or Camille, - I know not how it was spelled, and said priest reported it as thriving in Luzon or some place in the Philippines. He says further that when in the mid 1700's, Linnaeus was naming and classifying plants, he had not actually seen the plant the reverend father had described but that he had known about it and that he named it camellia in honor of its discoverer. He further says it wasn't introduced into Europe until 1837, and that in 1848, following the appearance in that year of the A. Dumas, fils, opus, "La Dame aux Camillias", the book was wonderfully popular in the South, - the French speaking section and for that reason, the Knights took it as their insignia.

I hope Mr. Stimson is correct in all this. It seems odd that the plant should not have been introduced into Europe until 1837, for we know that it had been introduced into the Natchez country in the 1700's, - perhaps the 1770's or 1780's. It seems most odd it should have been flourishing down this way and would not make its bow in Europe for another half century.

It also seems odd that within the 11 years between its introduction into Europe in 1837 and the appearance of the Dumas, fils story in 1848, that this flower should have become so popular in such a short time and that "La Dame", obviously written a while before its release, should have reported the lady as being crazy about the flowers which would scarcely have been scattered about much in the decade between 1837 and 1848. But I pass this along because it interested me, --whether any of it be true or not. I might add that Mr. Stimson describes the camellia as being either white, pink or rose in coloring. Why he limited it to these three colors I can't imagine, since it appears in endless shades from white to deep scarlet, not to mention the spotted ones to boot. But regardless of that point, the finding of this data was unexpected in a book about American politics, and I dwell on it at this length regardless.

It seems to me there was a dab of mail today, and I shall cast about to see if I can find anything to enclose herewith. The clipping from the Teayune is of no importance, but I thought you would get a kick out of the unexpected appearance of the camel in the cane river column of up and down the street.

I hope to be up and away to town early in the morning to attend to one or two little matters, and back home again before the heat of the day gets too far advanced. And now for a splash and a round of tender leaf. I am making vast inroads on my mint bed but it seems to grow about as fast as I pluck its sprigs each night along about first dark. I enjoy my tender leaf doubly and of course you know why.....

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Friday, June 26th, 1953

memorandum:

Another hot day, but nothing remarkable about the heat, it has so long prevailed.

But fortunately there weren't pilgrims, --I did pause to knock wood, --for I had intended saying the same thing last night when Senator Fredericks put in an appearance, and I thought never would leave. It is rumored the winks are down the road somewhere, but I am holding the thought they may remain there.

I had planned to slide into town ahead of the heat this morning, but I reckoned without such an unpredictable as the master. I was "all sot" to leave at 7 when quite a new set of handy men, calling themselves carpenters, appeared. The up-shot of that visit was the installation of additional pillars on the galleries. Out of the 13 that had been there for the past quarter of a century, I got 12 replaced, and as the 13th one seems to be in pretty good condition, and certainly is now flanked by sturdy timbers that ought to give it courage to do or be likewise, I am altogether delighted at the up-shot at this effort to further the existence of this ancient domicile.

And then, just as I thought I was ready to take off, - after getting the pillar crew under full sail, a couple of other workmen, designated as expert glazers, put in their bows, saying they were fully prepared to put new glasses in the window of the several houses from which the big wind in May had lifted quite a few panes. Some of these were from the dormer windows of the attic, and required special measurements as some were set in on a curve, and so my start was further delayed. But eventually I got away, in quite a lather, but entranced to drink in the breeze the car provided, and as I was back home again before 11, I didn't linger long in the metropolitan area. Among other things, I deposited my radio at a repair place and did a bit of shopping for such imperative items as lemons for the tender leaf and so on. I had taken a plate



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for the two worsesleys to send to their respective mamas, but discovered I had no time left to get around to the lady doctor's office to leave the package but, just as I stepped into my car, none other than Don stepped up to say howdy, and thus was I able to get a special messenger without any difficulty.

On my r turn to Iucca, I found the telephone ringing. It was from a local mulatto, --living just on this side of the spillway, in the house this side of the water from where we dropped in to see Log. The mulatto went to some length to explain that she had recently become the Godmother of a Louis Jones descendant who had been born on the 8th of May, last past, and that the mother and father had fortified her with a birth certificate which she was prepared to submit to me on their behalf as proof of eliability for a rown of matchitoches plate. She seemed to swoon when I said her word was sufficient and that she could come any time she wanted to in order to pick up the plate for her godchild and that in doing so, she had better be prepared to carry off a second one, for I felt such a godmother deserved one as much as her godchild. She did much giggling and demonstrated no end of evidence of her enchantment, and I reckon she will be passing this way any old time but probably along about the 4th of July when half the Henrys on earth are here and the place is bogged down with pilgrims. They have a genius for such ill-starred appearances.

The letter from little Miss Ramsey seems to run pretty true to form. You will note it is dated on Thursday, is cancelled on Wednesday and reaches me on Friday, and I am asked if "next week" would be a fine time for her to head down this way. As next week is probably any week, and isn't employed so much as a threat to come as an excuse for dawdling, I shall not lose much sleep over any attempts to fathom her precise meaning, if any. She has on occasion in the past inclined to get into my hair but that time has long since passed and whenever she comes this way, I shall be entranced to see her but I shall count on her for anything not at all. Helen was so right about the farm, but perhaps the farm, too, has its advantages in its alibis. Cutting hay seems to be one excuse, photographic jobs another and although they are not trotted out jointly, I suppose they are served up to cover the same case, --and personally I don't care.

And so we head into another week end and I'm hoping whole heartedly that your may be a peaceful one, bubbling over with relaxations and not so much as a shadow of company within miles.....

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Monday, June 28th, 1953.

Memorandum: I had forgotten how del cious could be the sound of rain on the great flatleaves of the banana plants. Last night the forecast, as usual, was for 100 degrees or heat with clear to partly cloudy skies. But when I awoke a little before 5 this morning, it seemed a little darker than usual and I noticed a fine mist shrouding the white garden. The mist kept up for two or three hours and then developed into a splendid gentle shower. And the same pattern remained throughout the day, pin point mists intersersed with generous showers, and, thanks to the cloud coverage, the thermometer didn't go above the upper 80's, I think. And while that is sufficient warmth to make things a bit sticky, still it is producing a maximum of benefit to pastures, cotton fields and gardens alike. We may have other showers in the weeks ahead, but even if we don't get any before the annual early September storms, we shall have had enough today to hold us over nicely.

Yesterday noon I told the cook that if she passed for being smart, she would give supper a little earlier, what with the winks in Blountville. On circumstances prevented her from getting ahead on schedule with the result that the whole shooting match blew in just as we were finishing supper. They said they didn't want any food, as they had been eating all afternoon and were then heading for home, but....if there could be some scrambled eggs prepared a d some this, that and the other thing rounded up, they would have a little bite of something or other.

Remembering the sister had explained at Christmas time that the only reason she came to Melrose on that occasion was because she hadn't seen Joe Henry since the madam died, I asked her, - since Joe had not been here then, if she would make it on July 4th when he is planning to be here. She responded emphatically that she would most certainly not come to get



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tangled up with such a disagreeable person as Joe. They finally did decide, however, to pass this way a week hence, - the afternoon of July 5th, and leave the children here to spend their vacation. That is something to contemplate, but sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

It was nice having a card from Paris from Pat on Saturday. I am glad for every day he spends in Europe, hoping that some appreciation of Louisiana may be increased for him with the exposure of his personality to things European before he settles down for his work-a-day existence, following his military service. It is my understanding that his girl friend is in Europe for a couple of weeks at the present time and they had planned to be married there, but J. H. says a recent letter from Pat states he proposed to put off marriage indefinitely. Time will tell, as somebody has remarked before.

I got around to read a few pages from Earle Stanley Gardener's "Last Court of Recours, or rather "Court of Last Recourse", and found it excellent for putting me to sleep. The thing, of course, revolves about contemporary cases of people convicted of crimes of which they have actually been innocent, and perhaps the thing wouldn't be so conducive to sleep, were the weather more mild. I shall sample a page tonight and see what effect the humidity is having on my ability to keep awake.

If this week's mail should be classified with a single expression, "Post Card" would be the word. I suppose because it is vacation time in part, I suppose, there have been lots of them this week, coming to both sides of the fence, and I was impressed by a declaration Celeste made yesterday when she declared with vehemence:

"If I don't do anything else next summer, I certainly am going to Europe."

My guess is that she will probably do several other things, and most of them will rank with the European jaunt as of about the same value so far as what she will get out of them.

I got my radio back from town and so am looking forward to hearing little Miss Roundtree go into her act tonight if I can knock out half a dozen letters before her magical hour strikes. I missed invitation to Learning but perhaps I shall catch up with the broadcast if my letter of a week back be-stirs library of Congress to transcribe these programs for Talking Books. The fine mist continues and vegetation must be tickled pink over the whole unexpected business of dews and damps.....

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Monday, June 29th, 1953.

Memorandum:

It is worth reporting, even though it didn't amount to much, --we again got a passing shower today. Sunday's and Monday's rain might total a little over half an inch. That will accomplish miracles, and although we could readily take an inch or two, still what we have had is of the greatest benefit.

Today's mail wasn't much but I send some of it along regardless. The hurly-burly of the Storm menage leaves me quite in the dark as to what is biting those people. I take it from the enclosed card that Briarwood wasn't honored by a visit. If I interpret the card correctly, it was a la Storm who flew to New Orleans. I understood Kay was driving across the continent, although from today's card, I am not sure about what means of travel she is employing. With the note penned in New Orleans or Beaumont and mailed in Liberty, Texas, --where ever Liberty may be, I suppose the jaunt may be in progress by car, but by car or plane, it really makes no difference in the general scheme of things.

As for Daisy in the Dell, it is always nice to hear from her. I am glad she is planning to make Natchitoches rather than Natchez on her September trip to New Orleans. Perhaps she will pass by Natchitoches on one segment of the circle from Dallas southward, and Natchez on the other.

In spite of yesterday's shower, which certainly contributed nothing to the dry status of the new pillars giving on the White Garden, I decided that a first coat of white paint would be absorbed readily enough, and so I slapped an initial coat on the new installations and shall take another swing at a second coat on the morrow. In the mist of my brush work, my former secretary, Y. C. came to see me. We had passed this way from Shreveport and she dropped in for a quick howdy before heading up the road again. His sister, Mailee, was helping her mama in



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preparing supper tonight, and dropped by Yucca to say Howdy just before the supper bell rang. Thus I saw two former secretaries in a single afternoon, and was delighted the the double opportunity, for they are both nice youngsters.

As for myself, I have tried something new in the Tender Leaf department. It's nothing very startling, but merely something I hadn't thought of before, and so I must pass it along. I have been making use of much ice during this past month of torrid nights and naturally, as the Reading Machine was want to spin 'round along with the clock, the presence of considerable displacement of ice in the tea container tended to dilute the flavor a bit toward the end of the somewhat prolonged sitting. And so, by dint of vast mental struggling, I hit on the idea of freezing cubes of ice tea. It is my custom to make the ice tea, or rather the plain tea about one o'clock noon and place it in the cie box, after it has cooled, where it remains until 9 o'clock when I plunge in a flock of ice cubes, put on the cover again and after returning to Yucca from "elsewhere", collapse in my arm chair to have a go at reading and drinking. But having hit on the idea of freezing half the tea into ice cubes, I put half plain ice and half tea ice in my receptacle so that as each melts, the strength of the initial brew is out but slightly although the quantity of ice thus put into the pitcher is the same. I suppose everybody who has any sense has long done just that self same thing, but somehow I never heard of anyone who did, and I'm glad I stumbled on the idea, for it is pleasant to realize that regardless of the melting process going on, the strength of the brew isn't decreased. For all I know, General Foods or Standard Brands may long since have introduced frozen tea and frozen coffees to be melted down and served boiling hot. They ought to be able to do some business at comparatively modest costs, I should imagine, in such a commodity up for the freezing.

The Pecan Growers Association holds its annual meeting on Thursday of this week. This year the conclave assembles at New Iberia which makes it pleasant for Celeste who can go with J. H. as far as the town and then spend the day with Betty Regard Courager. According to the calendar, Celeste has a full schedule for every day this week ending up with Friday at home when the S. G. contingent arrives for the week end. Thus things unravel and the day to day pattern unfolds, amazingly alike, each day to the other, and doubly so for the squirrel spinning around in his revolving cage.....

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Tuesday, June 30th, 1953.

Memorandum:

here's a Melrose "Much Ado About Nothing".

The scene was Celeste's gallery. The time was the coffee hour at 9. The people present were Celeste, Madame Regard and myself.

Celeste was called to the telephone. She returned saying that one of her friends in town had guests from Missouri and Michigan who wanted to make a tour either today or Thursday and were asking if either day could be arranged and what hour would be convenient. I said today would be fine and 2 o'clock perfect. She disappeared and returned, saying they couldn't leave town until 2. I said 2:30 would be good. She disappeared and returned, saying they would be here and that one of the ladies was bringing me some cookies made by her own hand. I said that was fine, as I liked to nibble on something at the close of day while trying to keep awake at my reading machine. Celeste said she wanted some of the cookies. Madame Regard said she couldn't imagine her wanting to do me out of my cookies since there was more pastry in the house than could ever be eaten. Celeste still wanted some of the cookies.

And so the afternoon arrived and the ladies flew off to town to the beauty parlor. 2:30 came and went, and eventually the pilgrims arrived at 4:10. One of them was carrying a package about the size and shape of a shoe box. She kept hold of it throughout the tour, and a mighty exhausting tour it was. - the weather hot, the pilgrims inordinately dumb. On saying goodbye at the front gate, one of the ladies made quite a stilted presentation speech. On receiving the box, I responded with what grace I could master.

Between the front gate and the big palm, I peed into the box which seemed unusually light. "Chiffon cookies" I said to myself, although I had never heard of such a thing. But I was wrong. Cookies there were, --twelve of them, about the size of a quarter each, neatly laid out in rows of six each. Why so roomy a box I wouldn't know. As I approached the old magnolia beside the path leading across the fence, I turned in that direction instead of continuing my course more or less straight ahead to Yucca. I placed the box on the dining room table next door, and by this late hour, I suppose all the cookies have been consumed.



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I hope they turned out to be good ones. At least they had the virtue of looking dainty in design and modest in quantity about nothing, and it would be misleading if I gave the impression that the day's course was all quite so Picayune-ish. It wasn't and there were some San Antonio pilgrims just at dinner time who were really very nice. I am astonished at my own inability to build bulwarks against varying personalities, for civilized ones somehow impart such an exhilaration while dumb ones enervate me to measurements of a pancake.

As a result of Sunday's and Monday's showers, an assault was made on the bulb garden by countless potential fisher folk who turned the place into a shambles, digging up vast crater holes perhaps 6 feet in diameter and leaving the narcissus bulbs where ever they chanced to come to the surface. I hope they got enough bait to make this marauding worth while on their account if not on mine. But I turned the thing to what advantage I could by gathering up three or four bushels which will find their way along the newly constructed Arenbourg fence, and so there will be no great loss without some small gain. I did, however, put out the word that the bulb garden was closed as a place for worm digging and even went a step further and suggested that if people couldn't find worms in the wood lot, they might try digging in Miss Celeste's front yard, and by so doing, they could find out readily enough if bait digging on cultivated property would be to their advantage.

I shall enclose a letter in tomorrow's post from the American Foundation regarding the transcribing of the invitation to Learning program. I shall write Dr. Bryson tonight and may have to hold the foundation letter until I can get a bit of re-reading done from it. I am surprised Columbia balked in 1950. Perhaps a little added persuasion was needed. Perhaps they have acquired a little more sense as between then and now. I hope.

I talked with Ora today. She seems to be getting along alright. She says she is busy running up dresses for her daughter who is taking a summer course at the local college, and apparently going out a bit to boot. Ora told me that Howard East's books are among those being removed from American library shelves abroad. What a lot of tom foolery we are confronted with, and thanks for same are perhaps especially due to the Wisconsin senator. Ora said she read the biographies of Peter Altgeld and Tom Payne and liked them both. So did I. I sometimes wonder if there aren't a heap more crack-pots in Congress besides the ones the press and radio are always quoting. I sometimes think the news serves might really render a distinct service to the nation if they would soft peddle the McCarthy sensationalisms and thereby take half the wind out of his sails by

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the country, through fields and forests to St. Vermeil-en-  
Lays, and on the way I suppose these were the  
early in the land.

It is wonderful to know that dawn seems to be breaking at  
long last through the mists of the photograph in color  
Wednesday, July 1st, 1953.

I have a very good copy of the photograph of the  
man of your generous memory of certain of the  
and the photograph of the man of your memory of the  
and the photograph of the man of your memory of the  
memorandum: I have a very good copy of the photograph of the  
man of your generous memory of certain of the  
and the photograph of the man of your memory of the  
and the photograph of the man of your memory of the

Your elegant letter of Saturday, the 27th, came to my  
hand, along with all the enclosures, in today's post.

Just where may I begin to say how much I appreciate all.  
But before anything, let me first refer to one or two  
of your inquiries. As regards the "Sunday cut", any  
notation you think suitable would suit me to a T. Perhaps  
perhaps "Yucca house" - Melrose, Louisiana" or some such  
might turn the trick as neatly as anything, since that  
would identify the building and at the same time provide  
the address, should the stationary ever be used for people  
like, oh...Dr. Bryson, ...who would need a post office address,  
being unacquainted with the Melrose set up. But if  
you have in mind any other idea, that will be fine, which ever  
sounds better: a house in Melrose, Louisiana, or a house in  
Yucca house.

or  
I am under the impression the less lettering or rather  
the most boiled down notation would be best, although,  
if that were not a factor, the word "plantation" might be  
in order, but that requires the repetition of Melrose, and  
thus tends to bog the thing down a bit.  
How ever the business turns, I know I am going to love  
it for itself and for little Miss Lee.  
I am indebted to you for having had the little prints made.  
The one snapped in aquatic surroundings was taken on  
the little lake in the Bois de Boulogne by one of my  
school friends. The others were taken at St. Cloud where we  
used to like to go in early spring for little walks in the  
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the country, through fields and forests to St. Germain-en-Laye, Meudon and Marly. I suppose these were snapped early in the 1920's.

It is wonderful to know that dawn seems to be breaking at long last through the medium of the photograph in color. I shall keep my fingers crossed.

And may I tell you how deeply appreciative I am of your generous mention of certain details regarding the Audubon business. It is so kind of you and yet so precisely like little Miss Lee. It appears, however, from where I sit, that the Audubon is going to roll along nicely and although there will not be the re-order volume I had originally anticipated, --short circuited by Mr. Wells, still the creation will float itself through solvency, I think, without any hitches.

Somewhat I needed just the mention by your own true hand, plus the reproductions from the newspaper of the other pictorial plates, to give me the precise push that impelled me to untangle the design of the Joyous Coast which has been resting for quite a while as I pondered on how I could twist the thing exactly as I wanted to. Immediately after reading your letter, I discovered that the problem had solved itself, and I pushed the thing through to the final twist.

It was so thoughtful of you to send along the article in the Iris. I shall enjoy reading it and so will the ladies across the fence, although I shall save it for them until after the week end has blown itself out. I know they will enjoy it, too.

And thank you much for the transcriptions of the poem and the letter, --the birth of Louisiana and the presentation copy from Miss Wellie.

On the home front, the hot weather continues. I was a little surprised this morning when Andy appeared rather early, a little after 5, saying Jessie's little boy last evening fell off the gallery "and busted the middle of his foot so it hanged, --the toe, slap by the heel". They didn't have any coal oil to put on it, and Mr. Perry, that hill Billy father of the child, said it wouldn't do any good to take the child to a doctor. Coal oil for a broken bone and no doctor. Well, before the knew what had struck them, the child was speeding toward the office of the lady doctor in town.

Small else runs according to pattern and my day is the happier simply because of the existence of little Miss Lee.....

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REA paper

Thursday, July 2nd, 1963.

Memorandum:

It was so nice to have your elegant letter of the 27th to run through again today. The postman held out of 1st class items today but that didn't matter at all, since I had yours which had come to hand yesterday to run through all over again.

I neglected to thank you yesterday for telling me about the knighting of John Gielgud. Surely he is a great artist and deserves whatever honor the Crown feels impelled to bestow. I think I have seen him but once, --the time in Hamlet, which was perhaps as good a thing to see him in as any, and I was enormously impressed by his artistry.

I don't know if I mentioned that Dr. Rand passed this way yesterday for a moment. It is always a pleasure to see him. I suppose some of the family were up for supper at the camp. They sent me over a bountiful repast, knowing that I probably wouldn't get over to join them. It happened that pilgrims were here when the doctor came, and such evidence ought to be convincing that it isn't a easy for me to pull out on a moment's notice.

Dr. Rand had telephoned me yesterday morning, asking if he might bring some people today. It is always a pleasure to see him, and although I had pilgrims before his party arrived at 2:30 and after their departure around 4, I wasn't too enervated by the doings, what with everybody being interested in what they had to see.

Since writing you last night and re-reading your letter today I have given more thought to what should go on the stationary. I always believe, as did Lyle, that the word, plantation, should be kept alive through constant useage. Do you think we would do best to leave things as I suggested yesterday, or should we see how it would shape up, reading

Yucca House, Melrose Plantation Melrose, Louisiana.

Whatever you think will look best in connection with the illustration will delight me. I know I am going to love the stationary and how you decide the final lettering should appear to best advantage will please me endlessly.



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The power of publication made itself felt again today when three or four different knots of pilgrims, hailing from different sections of Louisiana, passed this way for a tour after seeing something about "elrose in some R. E. A. paper which apparantly went into the mails yesterday. I understand we get the sheet but as no papers came in today's post, I don't know what the article was about but assume it was one stirred up by a gentleman who was here a while back from somewhere in South Louisiana. Three telephone calls before 9 this morning from people in various quarters referred to the item, and the pilgrims from further afield began appearing this afternoon. I suppose this will tend to increase the 4th of July trade considerably at this bend of the river.

Lucia has a couple of new residents who made their bow today when two of the four eggs in the little nest on the gallery hatched. I expect the other two eggs will unburden their sparks of life within the next 24 hours. Extra portions of bread and corn meal are appearing on the top of the old cistern at the end of the gallery so that the mother bird doesn't have to flit more than six feet from home to procure this type of food for her new offspring. Up to now, the contemporary Grandpa who eats hard by the box where the nest rests hasn't manifested any interest in the sounds of the little ones responding to their mother's return with provender. I take it the bird and the cat must have come to a friendly understanding a long time back about the matter, and as the cat is being provided with more than ample stores, perhaps he will never experience any impulse to distrube the new family of feathered associates. --I hope.

J. H. and Celeste had headed out for New Iberia this morning before I put in an appearance across the fence around 5:45. I believe they took Clyde Claude Bennett Davis with them as driver. Somebody said today's program includes a tour for the Pecan Growers Association of the Avery Island and Jefferson Salt Mines, so their day ought to be a fairly full one by the time they get back home tonight.

With the thermometer continuing in the upper 90's, they are welcome to all this road running. Oddly enough Celeste will be wondering tomorrow why she is tired. But regardless of the enervation, she is the happier for being constantly on the go, and I am all in favor of that for her if that is what she relishes.

It's getting close to tender leaf time and I continue to bless the one who provided so generously for just this delicious brew.....

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Friday, July 3rd, 1958.  
I am writing this in a box of moments. I am sitting on the porch of the house where I am staying. I am writing this in a box of moments. I am sitting on the porch of the house where I am staying. I am writing this in a box of moments. I am sitting on the porch of the house where I am staying.

And so we shall along, heading toward the glorious 4th, which the weather man says will be fair and hot, and I am inclined to believe him. You had better get your things packed and get ready to go.

Under separate cover, I'll send along a couple of pages from the A. M. A. publication which may amuse you to glance through. I believe on the back page there is a picture of the local board members of A. M. A., and I suppose you will be able to pick out J. H. readily, --assuming the picture is any good.

It is suppose the Henrys will arrive tonight and the S. G.'s on the morrow, and all will probably leave on Sunday noon, making way for the weeks, scheduled to arrive in the afternoon. It looks like a shambles of a week just ahead.

By now your momentary vacation will have gotten underway, and let us hope you are bubbling over with good health so that you may enjoy much collapsing during the interim.

Celeste reports a big time in South Louisiana where she spent the day yesterday. She said it was terribly hot, however, which, of course, was no surprise. She has been busy today with two or three servants dusting off the big house and generally clearing the decks for the week end. She said she saw the Mulaloves in New Iberia and they wanted to know "every thing about". I may have mentioned they were here last Sunday or the week before. They used to come here in the 1930's and 1940's but make the rounds from Shreveport more often of late. I reckon I'll see much of them before the summer has played out. They have asked if they can stop off to stroll through the gardens now and then when passing this way, finding them so restful. I hope they don't select a time when the weeks are on a tear. Surely Honey Island on the 4th would seem somnolet in contrast.



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Clemence came to see me at ten minutes to 9 this morning, when I was up to my hips in a dozen things, but naturally I found time to chat with her for a few moments. She explained she had left her gallon bottle on the front gallery, "aimin'" to get some fresh cistern water at the big house. When she got ready to leave, she remembered she had intended getting something or other in the bamboo hedge, left there a day or so ago, and so said au revoir and left by the gallery on the white garden side of the house.

Ten minutes later, as I was dashing to the Post Office, I remembered that Clemence had not taken her bottle with her, and when I returned from the Post Office, I found it----- of all places, where she had stuck it, -- slap in the box on the front gallery. -- a gallon jug, mind you, slap on the wren's nest where the two little birds, hatched out yesterday, had been joined by two more little friends, hatched out during the night. --

It didn't take me long to snatch the jug out and discovered that although the nest had been mashed down a little, the baby birds were still alive and kicking.

I restored the newspaper that had served as a sort of canopy but although I glanced in the general direction several times during the day, I never did see either of the parents. Tonight along about first dark, I heard the unmistakable song of the parent bird off in the direction of the bank of honey suckle that festoons the picket fence, and a moment or two later both birds flitted into the banana leaves, hard by the gallery and thence into the box. A couple of the boys who had been working in the gardens, lingering for a few moments on the gallery, noticed that one of the birds was carrying food. And so after a day of regret for the safety of those sharing my house with me, I find myself slap happy tonight in knowing the whole family is safely and soundly together again.

Now airplanes along about sunset began spilling their "a ghastly dew" over magnolia cotton fields tonight, but an upper air current spilled most of it over Melrose, miles away. I suppose this acid will put a crimp in my banana crop, as the newly formed fruit seem to be effected by the stuff, but I draped a sheet over the stem and so perhaps nothing adverse will happen.

I shall fold now, holding the thought through the succeeding days that the rest period may be a restful one and withal happy....

1713

6170

Sunday, July 5th, 1953.

Memorandum:

The week end turned out so pleasantly, it is a pleasure to be able to express the hope that yours gravitated in an arc that has been equally satisfactory.

Following the advent of the Joe Henrys on Friday night, the S. G. Henrys, senior, arrived from Baton Rouge around 10 o'clock on Saturday morning. Thus we were able to have a gay family dinner in the summer dining room you well remember, and although the weather was sweltering, the cieling fan made everything about the board comfortable and the food was delicious.

In the afternoon the gentlemen inspected plantation holdings while the ladies indulged in bridge. Only the clerk and I supped together. The three sets of Henrys had decided to attend the Lester Hughes party at his camp in the Bermuda section and, as usual, as I had declined, I was delighted to break bread in quiet with Eugene and then to begin digging in the cool of the evening to provide both sets of trans-Melrose Henrys with bulbs and plants they had expressed a hope they might take with them when they got ready to leave today.

I believe the party lasted until 11 or 12 o'clock, and so I was a little surprised when I passed by the big house at 7 this morning to find that the S.G.'s and the J.M.'s were already at breakfast. I joined them, and they asked if they could make a composite garden tour in spite of the heavy dew. They could, and we had about an hour or so and a half of it.

With the grape myrtles currently at their best and the day lilies, gladioli and even a few gladioli magnolias, and all of them looking to good advantage in the pre-heat period, everybody seemed to enjoy it, and I was even a little surprised, in view of the general love for his mama that he should say at the conclusion of that never in his life had he seen the gardens look so pretty. I hope you are having a happy vacation to your holiday.



0710

6171

A Sunday dinner had been planned for the big house but arrangements were altered when the visitors decided they would do well to head homeward before the full oven heat got turned on. And so by 10 o'clock everyone had departed and I broke bread at noon across the fence.

This afternoon was sufficiently unsettled, what with the statement by the winks last Saturday that they would be coming here this afternoon on their way from New Roads to Shreveport, with a view of dropping the children. Well, they never did show up and not a peep has been heard from them, although Joe had a birthday telegram on Saturday from sister, sent from Alexandria, indicating that they had kept to that part of their program, outlined a week earlier to the effect that they would spend the 4th of July week end with Uncle Stephen on False River. I suppose our cross will probably arrive 6 or 7 days behind scheduled.

Whitfield Mack appeared on my gallery along about 4 p.m. He said a flock of people were at the sand camp and he had come over to invite me for supper. I explained that I was alone on the place, the ladies having gone to town, and in view of the impending wink visitation, I had better "stay-put". He thought the same reason was an excellent move for him to fade out of the picture before they put in an appearance. He returned an hour later, however, bringing with him a huge black chocolate cake which B. Randolph had stirred up for me and which she had intended delivering in person until she heard of my expected visitors.

So things rocked along and so the week end of the 4th has played out.

We supped across the fence at 9 and while thus engaged, somebody called J. A. from town to say they would love a tour on Monday morning at 9. He asked me about it and I assented.

Never before did I hear J. A. remark about Van's drinking. Van had been down for dinner on Saturday. He and Joe never get along and not the least reason is because Joe is always in favor of doing things for Melrose, - resouration, etc., while Van is violent in his opposition. They seemed to get along alright at dinner but at supper tonight, J. A. remarked he had seen Van in town during the afternoon and that he was dinkin heavily and that he was complaining bitterly about Joe. Joe talks of retiring before long, selling his Texas property and building himself a home inatchitoches. Perhaps that is where the rub comes and the need for artificial stimulants. So hope you are having a happy introduction to your holiday.....

8710

6172

Monday, July 6th, 1953.

Memorandum: There is nothing or any particular interest in the enclosures but I send them along regardless. I must say, however, that the matter touched on in MORA's opening line beggars explanation. I have no doubt MORMAN is 500 or 600 miles from Melrose and what with the Moonerville relay and wireline system that seems to operate so far as mail is concerned, on the Texas and Pacific serving this area, I can only assume that through some twist the letter which was sent by ordinary post must have got itself glued to a batch of air mail stuff intended for the Oklahoma area and so hitch hiked itself a free ride by air. Sometimes it's difficult to "study up" any advantage in the humid weather we have been experiencing lately, but perhaps it is because the gum on the envelope became oozy and hereby effected the rapid delivery.

And making use of a word, as employed just above, recalls that I was impressed the other day when trying out a new secretary who stated off bravely in reading a letter, which was read as: "Dear Mr. McGum....."

This morning at 9 came some pilgrims from North Carolina, perhaps 8 of them, and quite dull they were, too. One gentleman, perhaps 60 years old, expressed polite but mild horror when I, needing a cigarette badly, offered him one. He thanked me with a measure of condescension and explained that never in his life had he tasted the smoke from a single cigarette and never had he tasted a drop of beer or any other alcoholic beverage. And the killing part of it was that he actually seemed mighty proud of his achievement which I suspected was about the only one he had to his credit.

As you will note from the enclosure, I am scheduled to get the dull Annie Gibsons on the morrow which is tiresome enough to contemplate. But perhaps in the afternoon I shall do better, for von Worsley's mother is visiting inatchitoches from out California and she is a nice person and I shall be glad to see her again.

.....



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tomorrow is another election day, while  
next week will witness what is known as General Election.  
I know not what the latter is about, but tomorrow's  
ballot casting is to constitute a run off vote for  
the naming of a County Clerk, voted on a week or so back.  
There were three or four candidates at the first election,--  
it was the only matter being voted on, but as none  
of the candidates won a majority of the ballots, it  
is required by law that the two people holding the  
greatest number of votes, submit themselves to another  
go-round on the part of the electorate. I suppose  
there is some good reason for this procedure but just  
why, I never have understood, for it would seem that  
according the office to the one holding the greatest  
number of votes would be generally satisfactory. But  
since the rules of the game are otherwise, polling places  
all over the parish will function from 6 a.m. until 9  
p.m. Melrose will hope to garner 47 votes, as  
between 6 and 9 o'clock, and each of the five attendants  
at the polls here will receive \$25.00, which when  
multiplied to cover all the parish polling  
places, ought to bring the price of selecting a new  
County Clerk into a impressive investment.

It has been wonderfully demonstrated to me during  
the past few days how easily one can slip off on a tangent  
and find one's original goal obscured by insignificant  
circumstances now and then. After assembling all the data  
required for the Joyous Coast plate, I suddenly realized  
I had accepted the old Prudhomme legend that Pierre  
Emanuel Prudhomme had introduced cotton culture into  
the Red River basin along about 1800, and I intended  
incorporating this fact into the porcelain picture  
being prepared. Then I remembered something in Pratt  
or some such who had mentioned that in 1718 experiments  
were going on in theatchitoches area with cotton  
planting. As this statement dealt with a period flourishing  
years before old Pierre Emanuel was born, it seemed  
a bit inaccurate to set him forth as having introduced  
the staple. This set in motion a series of wheels  
to turning, and, as so often happens in scientific  
pursuits, I suppose, I suddenly realized that the  
more I learned about the cotton introduction, the less  
I really knew. But now I am back on the track again,  
having realized it would be both futile and foolish to  
pursue this will-o'-the-wisp any further, and accordingly  
I am conjuring up a combination of words that will  
accord Pierre Emanuel and his cotton bowl a bit of  
distinction without giving him a citation for being  
the Christopher Columbus of Cane River cotton....

6174

6174

Tuesday, July 7th, 1953.

memorandum:

You will find the enclosure more interesting than  
the memo.

The pity seems to be that it was Carolyn and not Helen who  
did the selling. I shall be interested to have Helen's report  
on the transaction. If she gets enough out of the transfer  
to provide her an income for life, there surely must be some  
advantage.

I shall write both girls before folding up my beard and  
perhaps, perhaps not, something will be forth-coming from  
the waco area as a response.

I felt Carolyn explained away her absence in the immediate  
future from Melrose with a degree of adroitness. Frankly, I  
hope that the mention of November is suggestive of the time  
I may see her, --or at least some time after Labor Day, since  
the Samocles sword of Winks being upon us at any unimagineable  
moment leaves pleasure out of any consideration of impending  
guests in the civilized brackets. But now that Helen is  
without a household to attend to, perhaps she will feel more foot-  
loose, but I shall phrase my note to her in such a way as  
to paint a prettier picture of the Cane River country as  
in September than in July or August.

By dint of much final pulling and hauling, I finally  
got off the finished sketch and historical data to rock wall  
for the Joyous Coast plate. I suspect the average  
person glancing at any of said pieces has but scant notion of  
the amount of research required to bring them to the boiling  
point.

Today's final push had to do with the dates of  
Pierre Emanuel Prudhomme which the genealogist gives as  
1762 to 1845. A. B. Williams consulted the records as a check  
against the professed genealogist and came up with the 1762 date  
for the birth but a statement that said P. A. P. died  
in his 87th year, which, by no means of stretching could I pin down



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to 1845.

and then there was the Oaklawn property, built by Archille Prudhomme in 1858, according to the Prudhommes who are his grandchildren. According to the burial records, Archille died in 1854 which doesn't make it seem likely he was building more than a mansion in heaven at the date the grandchildren ascribe to Oaklawn.

Such are some of the problems confronting the research on such a job, and that there aren't more errors is remarkable, I suppose. Of course the nice thing about it is that the average person glancing at the porcelain is not interested in minute historical points, for if they were, they would be looking at penned and printed documents rather than such contrivances. And yet one difference in interpretation or one error in a year of no interest to anybody is sufficient to set a bunch of biddies cackling to such a pitch that the uninitiated gets the impression, I suppose, that none of the stuff is of any value. But the latter potentials never cause a ripple on my comparatively calm surface, for I go on the assumption it is better to have loved and lost, as Mr. Pennyson put it, than never to have loved at all, and if others eventually feel moved to make a more perfect contribution, the field is all theirs to have a go at.

The Gibson contingent came, and Annie was as nice as ever and John as much an annoying mosquito, buzzing about at sufficient rate to distract everyone else trying to absorb a tour. Their daughter, Frances, is very pleasant but somehow rigged herself up in a strange green panted costume that gave an impression to her general appearance that she was an antiquated clown although she is perhaps but 23 or 24. The couple of ladies with them were civilized and the morning went fast enough but I was glad when they had again mounted their horseless carriage and taken to the big road.

I am still wading through "A Book about American Politics" but I begin nodding about the time the disk starts revolving and so I don't seem to be getting very far very fast. I am chunking the New Orleans Library to hurry up and send me the volume of Mr. Freeman's opus on G. Washington, and I have a feeling my head will not nod so readily when that comes to hand.

It has been so nice chatting with you on this, your Tuesday vacation day, and now I shall roll up my sleeves, do some mail, and then collapse in a shower oficed tender leaf....

6176

6176

Wednesday, July 8th, 1953.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your elegant letter of Saturday in today's post. One thing and another prevented me from absorbing it as leisurely as I should have liked, but I shall be able to repeat the chat with you on the morrow, and points I was forced to slide along over too speedily today will be pondered over with less speed on the morrow.

Perhaps you mentioned, and perhaps I failed to catch the precise situation of the Van Cortlandt residence which has, fortunately, been snatched from destruction. I shall be glad on the morrow to note this paragraph with care, and if you did not refer to its precise location, I shall be glad if you will set me straight on the point. What with the old stone manor house of the Van Cortlandt's not far from 242nd Street, but well inside the park bearing that good old Dutch name, I suppose it cannot be that one but is perhaps one that is in a more urban situation. But where ever it is, let their be praises sung that it has been saved.

I so much appreciate your kindness in giving me some fine sketches of the contents of the Jean Jacques Rousseau volume. If it is not listed on the next Library of Congress list, let's tack it on, even though we have no idea if such suggestions are ever acted upon.

Circumstances prevented me from reading the clipping about the scrapbooks at today's sitting, but I shall get to that on the morrow, too, and shall enjoy it, and return it to you for your scrapbook.

I was interested in what you had to tell about the latest wrinkle in the tea business and merrily I rock along with my own type of brew. I stir mine up about 1:30 or 2, placing part of it in an ice tray for freezing and the balance in an old pitcher I recently unearthed from a forgotten armoire. The pitcher is of earthenware and perhaps holds a couple of quarts of liquid, - either fluid or frozen. I keep the cover



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on the pitcher while the stuff is in the ice box, and then around 9 o'clock when I find myself ready for a bit of reading, I rescue the pitcher from its chilly recess, dump in the frozen ice cubes, adding sugar over which I have poured hot tea earlier in the day, add a lemon, or juice thereof as the ice is put into the pitcher, and what with my glass already prettily festooned with a couple of sprays of mint from the bed growing hard by the big pot, I can collapse in my arm chair, set the reading machine to spinning, and with thoughts of little Miss Lee permeating everything like a mental aroma as precious as the flavor of the mint spreading through the frosty tea, my day comes to a close as happily as you can imagine, and doubly so because the whole thing really got under way because of the tender rain which arrived at birthday time.

I am glad to report that the family of wrens seem to be making it wonderfully and each morning early and late each evening the mama and papa birds p-se on the big flat banana leaves along the gallery and sing with vast joy, the sound of their voices sounding twice as loud because of the vibrations harbored by the projecting roof of the Yucca gallery. Since the near-disaster to the nest and its contents last week, I warn whatever workmen chance to be about against up-setting the apple cart, and the negroes seem to love it when I scream at a mulatto about "le oiseau de Bon Dieu a la boite" which seems to be about the only way an effective admonition can be made effective to one or two of the people around here who don't seem to understand English very well.

At coffee this morning, Celeste told me she is entertaining tomorrow afternoon. One credit mark I must accord her, --she never asks if any of her party friends can tour. But she said there will be a Mrs. Landry from Bayou Teche country whom she has met on several occasions when down yonder and that said lady has always inquired after my good health although she has never met me. Celeste, accordingly, made an exception in so far as this lady is concerned, asking me if I would receive her for a little chat at Yucca, unencumbered by the other guests. Of course I shall be glad to do so. It is said she has a marvelous ultra modern house, one side of same constructed on a curve, and of much glass, all of which over-looks the Teche. Perhaps she is an artist, I wouldn't know. Anyway, I shall glad to give her a half hour if that is what she wants.

And thanks for telling me about the new old painting at the Delgado. I want to read that paragraph in your letter again, too. It was such a nice long sitting we had today, even though we did have to rush it a little. I hope the weather is nice-nice and that you are relaxing no end.....

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Thursday, July 9th, 1958.  
Memorandum:

This would be the day on the calendar the butterfly lilies would make their bow. But last winter's warm weather seems to have been counter-balanced by this year or this summer's intense heat which has tended to slow up the flowering, and although the buds look altogether promising, the blossoms will not begin to unfold before several more days have elapsed.

I intended thanking you yesterday for having acquainted me with the new Hodding Carter volume, - "Main Street Comes to the River," --or some such. I hadn't heard of its scheduled appearance. From your account of its subject matter, I suppose it is an order from the publishers who wanted something after the manner of Will Percy's "Lanterns" and Kyle's "Joe Gilmore". I must pass along this news to Nora and shall not fail to mention that mine is the scene of the Carter creative work. Perhaps Nora is acquainted with this latter fact, but if not, I think he will be interested.

For the life or me, I can't imagine what recent information I gave you that settled some point in your mind about which it is premature to speak at the moment. You say I shall not have to wait long to find out and yet I never felt so much like John Dally's board of experts on "what's my line," and my guessing, without aid of positive and negative answers, seems to leave me entirely in the dark. What ever in the world I could have mentioned that might have settled any point, I simply can't envision, although I must hasten to confess that when chatting with you, I never stop to think on what individual subjects I may be touching and so trying to backtrack down some point or other through such an approach would be futile, since the latitude would appear considerable.

I had pilgrims today, but I made the coat-tails of most or them snap, so fast did I engineer their rounds. Celeste's Mrs. Landry was scheduled to appear at 3:45, and at 3:42 a couple of bags and youths appeared on my gallery, explaining they



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were friends of Cammie and lived in Shreveport and would I give them the key to the big house so they could go through it. imagine. First off, I told them I wouldn't give them a key to the big house for there never was such a thing, and in the second place I would give them two minutes look at things between here and the front gate, and if they felt like absorbing more at another go-round, they could telephone for an appointment. "Friends of Cammie" is a phrase nobody but a dunce would empty, I should imagine, and everyone who has ever used it on me has turned out to be just that.

Mrs. Andry came down one path as the dunces were leaving by another. She impressed me throughout our sitting as astonishingly like concepts I hold of the richness of Windsor. She is smart in appearance and clever in mind and it was a pleasure to collapse on a sofa with her and talk about anything coming to mind. She obviously wanted to present no problems or grind any axes, but merely wanted to establish contact. She spoke at some length of weeks and asked if she might bundle him up sometime and give him a quick go-round up cane river way. In three quarters of an hour, I handed her back across the fence, but took good care not to step my own foot beyond the side gate as I had no intention of getting tangled up in the bevy of biddies whose parked cars in Celeste's front yard reminded me of a crowded parking lot outside a baseball or football stadium.

My reading last night in the Stimson book brought me to the paragraph about Brady, the new York photographer of civil war scenes,-- a gentleman of whom you have spoken on occasion in the past. I was interested in the account and was impressed by the enormous number of plates Brady made during that inter-state squabble.

There was an interesting although brief biographical sketch of James Buchanan. Although I have on occasion been in Lancaster, Penn. I can't think how it was that I never got out to his estate, "Wheatlands", which, I suppose, still exists. I was fascinated by the account of the Buchanan engagement and the breaking off of same on the insistence of the girl's parents, and how the girl, telling her family she was going from Lancaster down to Philadelphia to the opera, actually registered in a Philadelphia hotel where she committed suicide, and how her parents wouldn't even permit her fiancé to view the remains or attend the funeral. I was interested in the account of Miss Lane, Buchanan's niece who was his hostess during his presidency. Stimson remarks that while minister to England, Buchanan and Alfred, Lord Tennyson, was given honorary degrees at Oxford but that little Miss Lane stole the show.

But it's tender leaf time and I must up and about same, blessing little Miss Lane the while for making possible this elegant brew..

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6180

Friday, July 10th, 1953.

Memorandum:

Partially cloudy weather kept the thermometer down to a mere 89 today which seemed wonderully cool. Ten degrees seems to give one lots of additional vigor, --if the move is in the right direction.

There seemed to be quite a lot of mail today but none of it of any special interest. Rock Hall sent a bill for some additional town of Watchitoches plates and mentioned that the son and family is scheduled to be moved from Alaska to the States this autumn, --a bit of news that of course delighted the parents.

If I can put hand to the letter from Mrs. Stirling, I shall send it along. It seems to contain nothing of interest, but I am delighted she is going to have the Minneapolis trip, for it is obvious a change of scenery will do her no end of good. I wonder at the hour she is to speak which seems odd. And I cannot help wondering to whom she has in mind sending extra copies of the N. E. A. thing.

Interruption.....

Mr. Rogers of Alexandria, the retired business man turned artist, came to show me a couple of canvases he had done of the cane river neighborhood. They are impressionistic but rather good, it seemed although newly varnished oils in the glare of artificial light imposes quite a stretch on the imagination.

A few months back, I contrived to get Mr. Rogers and Clarence together and they seem to be hitting it off famously, with Mr. Rogers bringing his canvases up from Alexandria to display to the widow Hunter, and the mutual interest they have in their respective treatments of identical subjects is affording them no end of pleasure by way of comparing and contrasting what they see and put down in paint.



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and speaking of artists, I am reminded I wanted to ask you again about *Flaisir de France* which I believe you reported as having been suspended, 10, these many years. But I thought I would mention it again and trusting you will let me know if it should ever be published again. As I understand it, magazine and newspaper print is mighty scarce in Europe these days and I suppose cultural things like *Flaisir* have scant chance in surviving in a world of bare necessities.

Had not the big freeze of 1951 knocked all the fig trees silly, we would be rolling in said fruit at this season. But the trees, putting out again from the roots, are only now beginning to produce a modest crop and it seems impossible to get very far with the harvest. I have put three different Ethiopians into the tender branches, but everyone declares the birds are getting the fruit before it turns ripe. I think, --and I hope that some of the designated gatherers are helping the birds out a bit to keep the harvest small, and measly it is, too, although I did round up enough for the morrow's breakfast for three or four people, telling Juanita to take the balance home for her family tonight. I have no idea if the little ones like figs but if their taste runs in the same direction with most plantation children, they probably adore them.

Water melon trucks from the Rio Grande and from Florida have been passing this way for weeks but only this week did any melons of local cultivation present themselves. Yesterday he stole brought some grown at Saline which you may have heard is reputedly the watermelon center of Louisiana and "ole Virginia" was once the queen of the festival there.

J. H. sent me half an one tonight, --a big one that had been in the deep freeze, -- and it was delicious. What he thought I would do with a whole half watermelon, I have no idea, but Friday night sees many a dusky movie fan wending his way toward the local honkey-tonk and a few slid through the bamboo hedge on the way so that disposing of the delectable item present no problem at all.

But it approaches tender dear time and after doing a bit of mail, I shall indulge myself in same, and tonight instead of reading, I shall have a dab of music along with the tea....

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Sunday, July 12th, 1953.

Memorandum:

I hope your week end, including the weather, has been as pleasant as the local one. Shortly after midnight on Friday - Saturday, the thermometer dropped down into the upper 60's, and the sensation of wanting to reach for a sheet instead of kicking it off was altogether pleasant. The thermometer reading today was in the 80's, but what with cloud coverage and the absence of humidity, it seemed pleasantly cool in contrast to the prolonged hovering around the 100 mark.

Dr. Wenk appeared on my gallery at 6:30 on Saturday morning. He had spent the night at Cloutierville and had come up here for breakfast. He joined me in breaking our fast and was gone before 7. He said the boys were leaving for the Boy Scout powwow in California on Sunday morning and that none of the family came down this way with him. Van Henry didn't show up during the week and according to report, he is still trying to drown his annoyance with Joe. J. H. left at 10 this morning to join J. A. Williams in Natchitoches to serve as convoy, I suppose, to a flock of Mexican laborers being returned to Laredo or Brownsville or where ever on the Texas-Mexican border. I gather that these imported laborers must have some time limit set on their stay in the United States, for with the cotton harvest only 4 weeks off, it seems probable they would remain here, instead of being supplanted by others, were there not some legal aspect involved.

I find it an interesting commentary of the life of a laborer in the United States versus Mexico in just two words, shouted by the majority of the Mexican laborers in Natchitoches - *Arish* when they are advised a few days in advance that their time in this country has about uplated you. Several different people who have been



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present when notification has been given have reported the same reaction. It seems that instinctively the individual Mexican cries out:

"No Mexico, .....no Mexico....."

the "no" being about the only word of English they have learned, but sufficient witness, to express their desire to remain in the country of the Natchitoches.

Under separate wrapper I am sending along a recent publication of the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, or some such organization. You will note a Natchitoches section, marked by a clip, and you will wonder, as do I, whence came the illustrations. I suppose we may assume they may have been acquired by Mrs. Holoman, or through Mrs. Holoman, for she is the only person I can think of who might have the uncorrected map of the Cane River country. It is nice that they, --the illustrations which you had executed, should appear in this publication which is widely distributed but it does seem odd that the Chamber of Commerce or Cane or Mrs. Holoman should have mentioned the matter in advance. Had the matter been brought up, I should, of course, have substituted the town of Natchitoches for the grandere illustration. The present copy being mailed to you came to me from La Montespain, but on learning of its existence, I contacted the Chamber of Commerce and shall be able to acquire several additional copies, so, should you have occasion to ~~make~~ use any more for pasting of some such, just let me know, and by the time you have advised me, the extra copies will have come to hand.

Three or four weeks back, Clemence asked me if she could make a sketch of the Cane River Gobelin. I told her she could. Eugene, the clerk, told me at breakfast that Mr. Rogers of Alexandria, who passed this way on Friday, had come up this way primarily to see Clemence who is making a quilt for him. I take it there is going to be a second Cane River Gobelin. If it turns out successfully, I shall set Clemence, after calling her a bag, to work on making some in quantity on the assumption that perhaps Quidia Shop might be interested. From where I sit, it appears Juanita is "great with child". I hope this doesn't mean she will be gone too long from her realm of pots and pans. My entire Sunday afternoon was full of pilgrims, including Mr. Rand and his son Morace, a flock of Reverend Sisters and the Lord knows whom else. Hope you got a measure of quiet.....

3813

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Monday, July 10th, 1963.

memorandum:

It's here, sitting on the tip top table along the side of my desk. It's working, too. And I love it.

I hadn't the vaguest notion as to what you had been talking about when you hinted that you would have something up your sleeve for me shortly, when last you wrote. And when the postman made his rounds this morning and presented me with the package, which traveled in perfect condition, I was still unable to guess its contents. I need scarcely add, however, that it didn't take me long to scurry through the gardens to Lucda and to unwrap the box. Frankly it is one of the nicest ice buckets I have ever seen, so elegant of line, so handsomely finished and so perfectly turned out to satisfy my deep summer needs. I am altogether delighted.

It has been my custom to put off getting my ice until I had finished my typewriting. The ice tended to melt considerably in the pitcher I had been using if I rounded up the cubes from the ice box at the big house too long in advance of the hour when I could fold up Mr. Underwood and unfold the reading machine. On occasion I would have divested myself of some of my garments while or before finishing my writing, what with the weather having been so tremendously hot. But I have restrained myself from doing so because there was the little journey to be made to the ice box sometime between 9 and 10. But tonight I inaugurated the use of the bucket before dark and although it has been here, filled with ice for almost 2 hours, the ice still remains as icy as ever, and when I get ready to collapse and have a go at the tender leaf, I shall bless you again, as I have so often as I looked in its direction today, and tonight the tender leaf, always delicious, thanks to its flavor and its association, will taste twice as good.

In short, I am altogether ~~and~~ ~~and~~ with my new bucket, which this first night seems like a glorified toy and which after



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the initial use, I feel certain, will metamorphose itself slap into a prime necessity.

A pin point drizzle began at 2 o'clock last night, and although it never could make up its mind to rain, the unbroken cloud coverage all day did occasionally let down a little sprinkle. The promise for the morrow is cloudy with widely scattered showers, and although I have a feeling we aren't likely to be in the wake of much of the rain, the cloudiness will give the plants an opportunity to absorb a maximum of humidity and whatever sprinkles pass this way.

The huge zinnia blossoms, 3 and 4 inches in diameter, were so heavy as a result of the drizzle last night that many of them by morning had bowed to the ground. On seeing the brick walk in front of the big house carpeted with these multi-colored patches of velvety colors, Sam, a race who was passing remarked that "the madam always had to stake up the ones she raised".

I was so glad Sam spoke thus, but in so doing, he brought to my mind the one thing these flowers remind me of, although until then, I couldn't figure out what it was. The madam, as a matter of fact, never raised zinnias, but sometime she was successful with dahlias, and Sam, remembering the dahlias to have been supported by stakes, had thought the big zinnias to be dahlias.

The other day Carmen Breazeale had telephoned me about something or other and in the course of her conversation asked if we had been ravaged by grasshoppers down this way. We had not.

She said they had swept over her section of Matchitones and that she had been particularly distressed because they had obliterated her zinnia bed of which she was particularly fond. I was accordingly glad of the opportunity to run in to town this afternoon and to cut a bouquet of the sagging blossoms from the brick walk, and take them a long to her. She seemed ever so pleased but like Sam, she mistook them at first sight for dahlias.

My trip to town proved pointless, as everyone I intended seeing was out of town. But I did take the opportunity on my return to pick up the Audubon-Oakley plates which had been at the Bayou Matchez station for me for a couple of weeks or more, - the ones from the Park Commission. Thus today unrolled, and now night is here and I am as nappy as a clam, thanks to this latest evidence of affection on the part of little Miss Lee.....

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Tues.

Wednesday, Bastille Day, 1953.  
As you will already have noticed the bold type on the envelope, the postman brought me the new typewriter ribbons this morning, --and that I made the most of them.

In the same post came the enlargements as souvenirs of your further kindness through the medium of pictures "struck" in the Bois de Boulogne and at St. Cloud, Le! these many years ago.

It was so good of you on both counts, and coming as they do on the heels of the splendid ice bucket, I find myself so bogged down with tokens of your generosity that I feel words altogether inadequate to express my appreciation on so many fronts. And so I shall merely say how grateful I am as I make use of the ribbons, re-capture the old days as I glance over the enlargements, and experience added comfort in the bucket to which I have already begun to feel is something that has always been mine.

Some idea of the excellence of the bucket may be imagined from this fact: I filled it with ice cubes last night about 7 o'clock and tonight, precisely 24 hours later, the cubes which I had not used last night remained unmelted in the bucket. This splendid achievement makes it possible for me to arrange my schedule each evening at twilight, or before, if I wish, and so not have to postpone this or that impulse until 9 o'clock or so when, in the past, I have made my nightly rounds to the ice box. And quite aside from its pragmatic potential, the bucket itself has such satisfying lines and such a noble finish that I am the happier every time I glance in its direction, both for Miss Lee and for the beauty of the thing itself. And again I thank you.

I ran into something of a tizzy when I stopped next door this morning for coffee. There was a vast "to-do" about rigging up a telegram to send to Bilexi, reserving rooms for madam regard and celeste at some fashionable place where they plan to be taken.



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themselves this coming Monday with a view of remaining for the balance of the week. Madam Regard doesn't seem to bat an eye last at driving 300 odd miles through the current Louisiana July heat and, besides, as the matter is explained, the place they are going is air conditioned. To get the benefit of that, I suppose, one must be inside, and since they have an excellent outfit across the fence, I sometimes wonder what it is that impells them to fly out for the sea shore to sit in an air conditioned room. But the weakness of my own head is demonstrated by my effort to try to figure out such impulses.

I was not expecting to see Blythe and at any time, and especially this afternoon, but she came with a Mrs. Stafford whom I seem to have met but do not remember.

Nothing was said about an impending pow-wow at the camp this coming Saturday. I suppose I shall hear about it tomorrow when the rest of the family makes a round. What Blythe came for particularly, she said, was to show me a couple of dolls, about 3 feet in height, made out of gourds of that measurement. One was not unlike the Reverend Dudley, gracing my desk but much larger, of course, the preacher holding a paper from which he is reading, his other arm up-raised in exhortation, the top of the gourd forms the top of his silk hat, with a band of black felt pasted on at right angles to form the brim. The other figure is an Aunt Jemima in calico flouncy dress, gay apron and sun bonnet, the head being formed by the top of the gourd. Unlike the figure of the clergyman, which was based on a gourd shaped like a cucumber, the Aunt Jemima foundation was a gourd the bottom of which was about the diameter of a water melon, tapering in to a top a couple of inches in diameter, forming the head. What with the bottom being at least 12 inches in diameter, and the whole a lovely chocolate brown, it was really arrestingly convincing when the skirt inadvertently was raised from behind, revealing a contour that was amazing. Blythe said she thought it would be nice to take these to the next movie they put on up here, which leads me to assume that what with Baptism time just in the offing, there's a renewed interest in our rural religious and recreational routine. And how I would love to hear you roll off those last few words in the foregoing sentence.

It seems to me there was something else I wanted to touch on but whatever it was eludes me and so I shall just let this slide along, as I turn to my mail, after which I shall turn to the tender leaf, blessing God and Miss Lee for the happiness of my days....

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*Madam Regard*

Wednesday, July 15th, 1953.  
Memorandum: I find myself in such a pleasant situation, the new typewriter ribbon immediately in front of me, the new & enlargements of ancient photographs on one side, the elegant new ice bucket on the other, all of which is just another way of saying that little Miss Lee is all over the place, and I love it.

When I stepped out on my front gallery this morning, I was entranced to notice another big old blusson on another Orinoco banana plant had unfolded its vast red leathery petals during the night. It is odd that this one should have kept so strictly to schedule, for usually the Orinoco makes up its mind about the middle of July and this one, of course, hit it slap in the nose.

Curiously enough the butterfly lilies continue to dwindle. The buds are all posed for business but the flowers continue coy about unfolding. Around 2 o'clock this afternoon we had a nice shower, and although I could never understand why that plants which are watered daily by bees should exert themselves mightily with a genuine rain, but still that seems to be the case, and so perhaps we shall have butterfly lily blossoms soon.

What with the arrival of a fresh supply of corn of Hatchitoches plates yesterday, I telephoned the Godmother of the local mulatto child born on that date and suggested that today at 3:30 would be an excellent time for picking up the porcelain department, one can always count on mulattoes, almost as one can count of white people, to bring one or two extra people along, for few people, white or colored, have yet learned that one gets that much farther in social contacts in proportion to the least number of persons participating in whatever enterprise.

Mable Morin and Carrie Kirland Morin (his wife), one Mrs. Venant (mother of the child), the child itself, some other woman and a couple of little girls, sort of 5 or 6 years old. All of them have skins lighter than mine, I suppose.

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since they tend to go to some length to protect themselves from any darkening effects of the sun's rays. Like me, they can, if they have a mind to, speak English that sounds like 20th century civilized conversation, and like me, they can, as I have heard them on the telephone, slip back into ante bellum "nigger" with the greatest of ease. They had obviously dressed for the occasion, Sunday clothes from the obvious newness, but withal in the same taste that one would encounter on the streets of any city. And after they had gone, I pondered much over the matter, perhaps a little more sympathetic for them than I usually am, wondering how it seems to them to rate as 2nd class citizens for most of their lives in Louisiana, even though they are bound to pass as 1st class white people when beyond the confines of their native parish.

Surely I could speculate on the whys and wherefores of their situation, -- from now until Jesus's day, and let us hope that when that day dawns, everybody's color will have faded or intensified into a hue undistinguishable and as such tomfoolery as to whether a person has a drop of this or that type of racial blood has passed out of the picture of things important.

Of the enclosures, there isn't anything of vast moment, but I thought you would be glad to see that Helen is apparently getting along alright. The news in the other letter that Cousin Josephine Grunewald and Cousin Guida may get into the cane river country in August is arresting. I shall convey the news across the fence on the morrow, for while the people will be coming in part to see me, perhaps they are, after all, kin to the Henrys and not to me, and whatever entertaining is to be done might as well start off on that basis.

Today's sudden embryo cloudburst tended to put the sinias nearest the roses leaves into convulsions, and a four or five foot convulsion is something to untangle in view of the brittle nature of the stalks of the things. It was a sight to see the 12 foot philippine lilies bowing and swaying in the sudden gusts of wind. Somehow their movements recalled those splendid lines in Oscar Wilde's "Birthday of the Infanta" in which the different varieties of flowers have a go at each other in a manner of speech as ridiculous as heard on occasion from the lips of human beings.

But the hour advances and I must roll up my sleeves, knock out some mail, and then collapse into a pool of tender leaf.....

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6190

Thursday, July 14th, 1933

Memorandum;

How nice to find your elegant letter of Saturday in today's post.

I am altogether enchanted to find so many delightful vignettes of your days spent in the neighborhood of the family hearth and the evenings in the environs of the city.

And I loved your account of the doings of our feathered and furred friends in the Botanical Gardens. I especially enjoyed the pictures of the fellows who would gather up the pieces of bread, taking them to the water to soak them a bit before consuming same. There used to be a big old swan in the Mamean lake at Petit Trianon who, on finding the first crust too hard, and having an eye on a second piece, would stick the first hard one under her wing at the water line and then, as though it had been consumed, stick up her neck for the second one, reminding of the clamoring of the other water fowls all around her, obviously feeling that her initial ration was quite secure in such a place of safety. After all the bread had been fed, she would fiddle and fuss around, sticking her head down into the mud along the margin of the lake, seemingly hunting for some morsel that had escaped the others. And then, after all the rest had departed, she would slyly insert her beak down under her wing, swallow the whole thing. -- by that time well soaked, and then with a vast clatter of wings, take to the air, sailing over the surface of the lake three feet above it, settling down at the far end where she made a great pretense at smoothing her feathers, although actually the flight following the eating of the concealed portion, must have eliminated any ruffle that had been caused by the hiding of the crust. I had forgotten about this old favorite of mine until you mentioned the ducking being practiced by the Botanical neighbors, and the thoughts of the duck enhanced the pleasure of the other for me.

And thanks for telling me of the Julius Caesar and the Melba productions. I had heard nothing of the former, and knew about the latter only because it changed to be listening to it to "What's My Line" when the stars of the Melba picture was the guest on the radio program. You mentioned Louis Valher as Julius Caesar. The last time I saw him on Broadway he appeared.....



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as Caesarorgia in some kind of a bleed and thunder, but beautiful  
rendition of some talk revolving about Italian Renaissance  
plot and counter-plot. As a chance to be re-reading Mr.  
Secourby's rendition of Benvenuto's autobiography, the  
memory of the calhern presentation came back with unusual  
vividness.

And speaking of the written word, I chance to hear  
Charles Collingwood tonight when he mentioned that today  
Milaire Bellee had died in his 80's, and that he had left  
an epitaph running something like this:

"When I am dead, may it be said: *ni jnece sayab nyoy* *fossejg*  
His sins were scarlet, but his books were red."

Believe me the brief biography of Marie Antoinette presents  
a better picture of that lady, but I must say some of the  
paragraphs in Bellee's biography of the same person were  
splendid. Although it has been a couple of decades since I  
read it, I remember so vividly how Bellee treated the matter  
pointing out that she was not important as a political  
figure but as a potential danger as a dirty, infected rag blowing  
about the streets of a great city. I thought he wrote the  
thing up masterfully. I believe one of his parents was English,  
the other French, and, oddly enough, he never did learn to speak  
any other language than English, although he studied mightily  
on at least one other French, and of course spent half his  
life on the continent.

And so the magical day has been set for the nuptials.  
Let us hold the thought that day is achieved and that everything  
works out to everyone's satisfaction. You speak so touchingly  
of the Christian virtues of the mother of the bride. Let us hope,  
for her sake especially, all goes well and that her own burdens  
may be the lighter when the fledgling tries his own wings.

Long ere now you will perhaps have noticed the enclosure.  
The annual miracle transpired this afternoon between 3:30 and 4.  
It was fairly warm this morning, followed by a brief shower at  
one o'clock, flowed by a flood of sunshine. I suppose it was the  
moisture plus the heat that turned the trick I haven't  
any understanding as to why I make such a racket about the  
first blossoms of the butterfly lilies each year but I have no intention  
of dissecting a rose or enumerating all the shades in a  
glorious sunset or the vibrations issuing from the heart of a  
loved one. Suffice it is to accept the fact, I guess, that  
these lilies and a certain miss have a heap of mutual attributes,  
and I love them.....

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Friday, July 15th, 1955.  
Memorandum  
Today's weather pattern was almost identical to yesterday's,  
the same humidity in the morning, the same little shower just  
after noon, and another explosion of butterfly lilies late  
in the day. By early next week there ought to be enough of them  
to enclose one each of Daisy in the Dell, Madam Marc, Anne  
Ritzell and so on.

Mr. Smith and Mr. Wier of the U. S. Agriculture Station in  
Shreveport were here for dinner. I always enjoy them and  
their conversation is unfailingly entertaining and often  
instructive. I want to share this little story of Mr. Smith's  
with you:

A teacher was trying to explain the mysteries of grammar  
to a class, notable neither for their interest nor their  
brilliance. The definition of "preposition" was recited and  
several examples given, as "A squirrel runs up the tree," "up" is a preposition, or  
"A squirrel runs down a tree," "down" is a preposition, or  
"A squirrel runs around a tree," "around" is a preposition.

A little later the class was given a test in grammar, one  
question being: What is a preposition.  
One student delivered this sentence:  
"A preposition is anything a squirrel can do with a tree."  
Well, you love that.

In the realm of correspondence, there seem to be several items  
which I shall send along, either herewith or under separate cover,  
although none of them are of any particular interest. The  
break and butter note from Della Anne Wilbourn of Lafayette, La., is  
noteworthy, however, because the child has just reached her 13th year,  
and seems to be unusual for writing at all in this day and age.



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In the pilgrimage section, I received a couple this afternoon, following a telephone conversation this morning, during which they said they were passing through this region and, having heard about melrose, was anxious to visit it. I assume they were given my number by the Chamber of Commerce, since my telephone isn't listed. When they arrived, they did not stop at the front gate, but drove in at the cattle gap, parked the car by the side gate, and then wandered off in the direction of the garden where Celeste cultivates roses behind her house. Now the get the inspiration to drive in. I can't imagine for as I was at the store when they arrived, I was well aware of the fact they didn't stop along the road between the bridge and here, they were very nice pleasant people, --and I think they were Malattoes. That's all there is to that story except to remark that as they both spoke in a manner not at all like Wane River residents, I assume they really did hail from the west coast, but I still am wondering by what instinct they drove along the new road route to the side gate which is never employed by others than people well acquainted with the melrose set-up.

Ora telephoned me this morning, seeking immediate information. She and R. B. recently purchased a lot adjoining their place, running from the highway to Wane River, opposite the hitchhiker. With a mind to cleaning up the place, they had turned in some of their prize sheep to browse around and had cut down an ancient cherry laurel street whose trunk was about gone but whose big limbs still supported a young forest of leaves and the latter were cut in such a way as to provide excellent fodder for the sheep. Then somebody this morning told Ora that they had heard cherry laurel would kill cows and Ora, of course, was curious to find out if it would kill sheep, too, and so had telephoned. I recommended she discourage the sheep from eating the leaves after they had dried but that I had no idea how long it took them to wither. I must ask somebody in the plant and animal know-how just how it is that the cherry laurel leaves can be eaten green without any harm being done, and how the withering process begets a poison that is deadly. It's the only plant I ever heard of which is meat to the bovine at one stage and poison at the next.

But I approach the end of this page and the day and tomorrow begins the week end. I have appointments for next week, but am hoping Saturday and Sunday may be comparatively quiet, both at this bend of the river and at yours....

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Sunday, July 19th, 1953.

Memorandum:

It has been drizzling and raining, raining a drizzling, since noon and from where I sit, I gather it is likely to be doing the same thing when I awaken in the morning.

The week end turned out rather differently than I had anticipated, as of Saturday, until noon, when Carolyn telephoned me from Marshall, asking if she might come down.

She arrived about 5 o'clock and remained until 11 o'clock this morning.

She had a letter from Holiday magazine, reminding her that if the Wane River story is to be used, in travelogue style, it must not exceed 1,500 words. She had wipped together much of the material we had trotted out on her last visit, and I recommended that we should go ahead and finish the article regardless of the word limit, after which, when the thing is complete, we can do a bit of chipping on our own hook, and leave a lot for the editors to hack at. Of course it is ridiculous to attempt doing an article on Wane River in 1,500 words if one is to present any reason for a magazine reader to work up interest in the locality. But I am under the impression the editor might be a little more generous with word limitations, once he has seen a flock of pretty pictures.

Carolyn is still enthusiastic over the prospects of her property and although she isn't making any payments on it, I suppose, she was nevertheless negotiating for additional land on Saturday morning before coming down here. It seems 75 or 100 acres of land adjoining hers has a pretty little lake and some big pine trees on it, and she would like to persuade the owner to sell. I can well imagine what Helen would have to say about that.

And speaking of Helen, Carolyn says Helen received 75 thousand dollars for her home holdings. I suppose it was a pretty place, but of course 75 thousand dollars might look pretty, too.



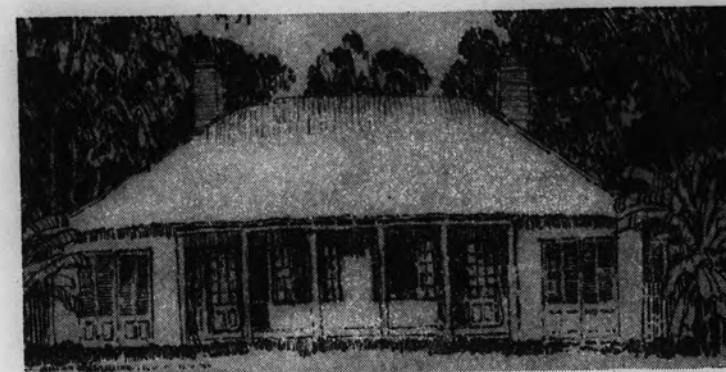
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Carolyn brought a little figure of a colored boy, in ~~XXXX~~ seated posture, perhaps 10 inches square at the base, and not more than that in height. It is made of plaster or some such, and is painted in gaudy colors, - the face black-black, the eyes white-white, and the coloring of the clothing startlingly red, yellow and so on. I placed it slap in the middle of the big pot where the surrounding water hyacinths tend to tone it down somewhat by partially covering it, and I am counting on the weather to give it a patina of age before long. It was certainly kind of her to contribute this item although in all frankness, I must confess, it is not precisely what I might have envisioned for such a situation. Eventually I may find something a bit more to my fancy, and if so, there will be plenty of less conspicuous places for the present occupant of the center surface of the big pot.

In view of Carolyn's presence, I of course did not get to  
tune in on Dr. Bryson. As I recall, the discussion was to center  
around Moby Dick and Herman Melville, about which I should have liked to  
learn something, since I never did succeed in wading through that  
opus, albeit I two or three times have taken a whack at it. But  
perhaps the thing will be recorded eventually, and then I can catch up  
a bit, although, as of up to now, nothing by way of a peep has been  
forthcoming either from Dr. Bryson or the Library of Congress regarding  
my recommendation concerning the recordings.

The rain this afternoon and tonight has brought the thermometer down to the upper 70's so that the ladies across the fence ought to experience quite pleasant temperatures as they head down the road at dawn tomorrow in the direction of Biloxi for their week's outing in an air conditioned establishment. The same rain induced 8 giant clusters of butterfly lilies to unfold their heavenly levliness along the gallery and I marvel at the almost identical timing they all employed to bring forth their delicate beauty and delicious perfume. During a half hour along about first dark when the drizzle had thinned to almost a mist, seven humming birds, without the protection of individual or group parasols, stood by while earlier arrivals were busy extracting the nectar from the blossoms. It was all very pretty and I was thinking how much little Miss Lee and Miss Nellie would have enjoyed sharing the sight with me.

but the hour advances and I must get to the mail which was neglected earlier today. I am hoping you, too, have glimpsed feathered friends this week end.....



MELROSE PLANTATION  
MELROSE, LOUISIANA

Monday, July 20th, 1958.

"It's just like the Bible say: 'It's so clear,'  
not even the fool could error it!"

Naturally, I had to examine the package containing your splendid gift, crack off the bat, and naturally I showed it to Leg whose observation was spontaneous after he had given a good gander to the Zucca reproduction.

And as he expressed my own feeling with greater force than I could, I let his words stand for mine, too, except to add my appreciation for the slight I find in the gift and the giver.

for anything so smartly contrived is bound to put it in the upper brackets, but for a little while I want to use it for all my correspondence, it affords me so much pleasure as I make use of it, and I feel instinctively a flock of people are going to be the happier in receiving a letter from Melrose when they discover the illustration of the house whence the message is penned.

in times past, I must confess I was forever wanting to preserve notes from Paula Parlange, not for anything they contained but merely because I was so enchanted with the picture of Parlange Plantation which appeared on some of the note stationery she used to employ. I fear some like

..... again my thanks for such happiness this station



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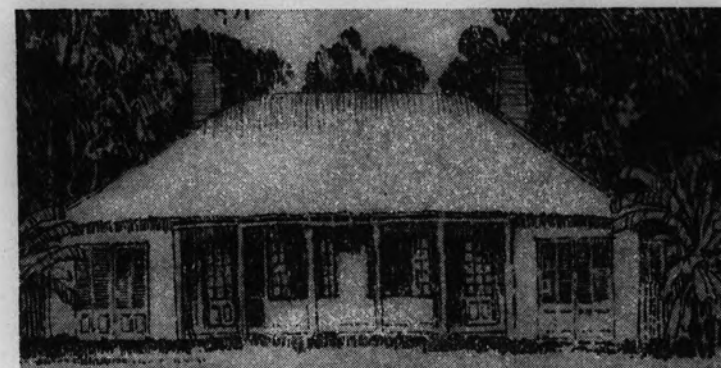
impulse might move casual correspondents receiving letters on this stationary to do the same, even though whatever appears on the page may be nothing but sheer trash. And so, --and the thought just strikes me, --perhaps this stationary will inspire me on my part to make the contents more in harmony with the excellence of the Yucca reproduction, and for a heap of people, that would be an indebtedness to you which only I would realize.

On the home front, the ladies got off for Biloxi a little after 5 o'clock this morning, and by this late hour have no doubt been long encased in their "ice box" on the Gulf Coast.

Beginning at 12:30 this noon, the weather man paroled out the same kind of weather he passed around yesterday, --a brisk rain, followed by an afternoon of drizzle. In spite of that inclemency, however, two different appointments were kept by pilgrims who paddled through mud but didn't seem to mind. The first group of about 8 people, perhaps 4 ladies and an equal number of gentlemen, somehow succeeded in boring me, unmercifully, although everyone was very nice. Perhaps getting off on the wrong foot was the statement of a Mr. Grove who modestly announced that he had the largest collection in the world of ante bellum paintings. Paintings were the thing he wanted to see and I felt he was absorbing what interested the others only through politeness. One of the gentlemen expressed the hope that I might see the Grove collection which seems to be so famous and so beautiful. I should really like to see it, as a matter of fact, but somehow Mr. Grove bored me so excessively that I didn't bother to restrain myself from displaying a reserved disdain regarding same. Mr. Grove thought I was a nit-wit, I suppose, and that tended to even things up, for I felt the same way about him. But on departing, he threatened to return in February to see the Chinese magnolias, but I warned him to write for an appointment. He lives in New Orleans, I believe, and I trust he stays there in February, at least.

A couple of letters came to hand but of no particular moment, although you will relish what Lillian Trichell has to say about Caroline's vast depression, the reason being so unexpected, and so crack-pot. .... Again my thanks for such happiness this stationary is guaranteeing me. ....

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# YUCCA HOUSE

MELROSE PLANTATION  
MELROSE, LOUISIANA

Memorandum  
Tuesday, July 21st, 1953  
New nice to find your elegant letter of Wednesday and Thursday in the post.

How nice to find your elegant letter of Wednesday and Thursday in the post.

As I am so glad to have news about all the subjects you touched on, I am especially delighted to know how things are shaping up for August 1st, and most especially that. This is finding things so much to her liking in the business bracket which you engineered to everyone's satisfaction. What a nice warm feeling it must generate around your own heart. Another would publication has come to hand which I need not, and which I shall accordingly send along forthwith.

And thanks for telling me about the continued publication of Flaisir de France. It is nice to know that such things survive the rigors of the ages. I noted with interest your observations regarding the shipment of the stationary. Luck was with the package, for it apparently was bounced, --somewhere along the route, --on one of the corners which didn't damage the paper but tended to bend it a little, as in the lower right hand corner of this sheet, which may or may not be noticeable. I have put the package under a press in the bindery, and I think in a day or so it will not even be noticeable. The bounce of it must have been a fairly hefty one since the paper wrapping was split from corner to corner but the split, induced by the sudden strain, did not open up, and so the contents, save for one or two sheets, weren't affected at all. Perhaps a dab of cardboard, either on the top or the bottom, would have warded off this strain, but whether that be so or not, the package came through with its contents intact, and, if I may repeat myself, as of yesterday, I am perfectly delighted with the whole composition, and particularly the thought behind it. Bless your heart.



8013

6199



And may I thank you for setting me straight about the location of the 'an Cortlandt house at Groton-en-mudson. I have always been floored the way the earlier colonist in the mudson valley especially, were no sooner finishing one house than they were starting another. The Livingstons, 'an Cortlandts, Phillips and so forth, all seemed to follow the same patter. I used to ponder on how the Phillips original home, situated there in the center of things at Yonkers, must have been very much in the country in colonial days, and yet they had that country place up yonder at Cobbs Ferry where I used to work and occasionally. Whenever I think of it, I think of that line:

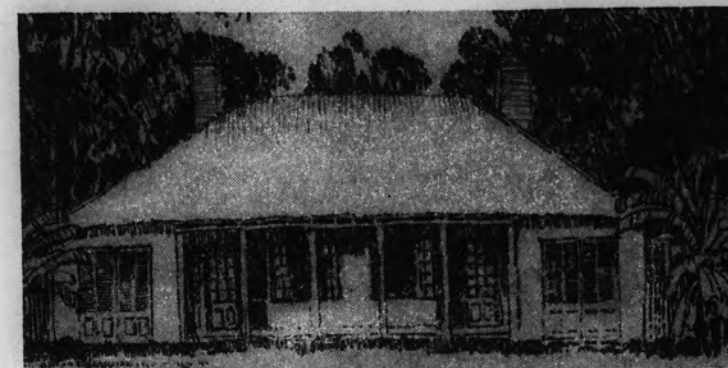
".....plus que princiere, presque royale....."

Wasn't it odd you should have stumbled over new wrinkles in dispensing of tea at just the moment the subject had been brought up. As regards the covered pitcher and the ice bucket, I find it so convenient to employ them both, for the ice in the covered pitcher always ran out or rather it was more precise, always tended to melt away long before I was finished reading and before my thirst had been quenched. Thanks to the splendid ice bucket, I don't have to over-lead the covered pitcher any more but can place both objects on my tray and proceed in a civilized and satisfying fashion to my heart's content.

On the phone front, our daily rain came at dawn instead of high noon, and that pleased me as it allowed me to shuffle around in the afternoon without getting too bogged down in mud. The clerk and I rigged up a breakfast on our own hook - grapefruit, bacon and eggs, toast and coffee and the overseer joined us for a spot of coffee. At noon we ate at the maid in that establishment stirring up a nice dinner for a child of 15 or 16 summers. Tonight we supped again at the big house, as in the morning, leaning heavily on picnic foods. They brought Bobbet Juanita back from the hospital this afternoon and I suppose to she will be putting in an appearance within a few days. I hope it is too easily to have post cards from Alexi where I trust the ladies are enjoying their inside air conditioning outing. The latest shuffling about in business seems wrought with interesting potentials. I shall follow the next move with attention. It is so noble of you to keep me informed, in spite of the handicaps in the communication field. Our silence will always be a quietude. ....

1033

6200



YUCCA HOUSE

MELROSE PLANTATION  
MELROSE, LOUISIANA

Wednesday, July 22nd, 1955.  
Memorandum  
Just off hand, don't you really like the new stationary.....  
I had always been using it with yucca slap in front of me and the new ice bucket alongside. I feel as happy as a clam, -- and all, as in so many other instances, thanks to little Miss Lee.  
To keep the weather pattern straight, we had another shower today, perhaps two. Everything looks wonderfully green in the garden, and in the cotton field, too, for that matter. But rain, about one drop is enough, knocks off the cotton blossoms and where ever a cotton blossom drops, no bell ever appears. But the cotton plant, as marvelous as the human heart, which tends to correct itself if given an opportunity, the cotton plant, if it loses too many blossoms, tends to add extra ones as the season advances, if earlier ones fail to produce a series of bolls on the initial go-round, and vice, if we should get about twenty days of dry weather immediately ahead, there would be as many bolls of fruit as scheduled. There is but one fly in this ointment, -- the weather report calls for cloudy weather with scattered showers for the morning. The Sabine River is approaching flood stage again, following the May floods and the June drought, but the Sabine flows slap south into the Gulf and although the upper reaches of the river are said to be swelling, there appears to be no likelihood of any high water in this area, even down to the Gulf.  
Between showers this morning, I dropped four houses down the road to my newly to Juanita. She is what the experts would dub a peck patient, in that she instinctively tries to give of the impression that her advantage point on the counterpane, the world looks bright and fair. But I believe she is getting along alright, and will probably be back on the job again along



0030

6201



about Monday.

Dr. Alben of the U. S. Experiment Station in Shreveport, was here for dinner today. I asked if Secretary Benson was doing right by the pecane section of the Agriculture Department. Dr. Alben talks very little but opined that Secretary Benson had probably never heard of a pecane. From what Dr. A. further said, I gather that the drastic cuts made by the Agriculture Department has eliminated further work on long range studies, initiated under the Roosevelt Administration, which had they been maintained a little longer, would have produced results in the field of knowledge that would be invaluable. He mentioned, among other things, that work on the Japanese beetle, had been discontinued, and he seemed to feel that was not only a great pity but simply "penny wise, pound foolish". Probably you see references to such matters in the press and as I am better acquainted with the details than I, but I pass these observations along, thinking that personal opinions of those concerned with the actual work of the federal agencies, is always interesting as a commentary on news reports. Dr. Alben has been with the service twenty five years.

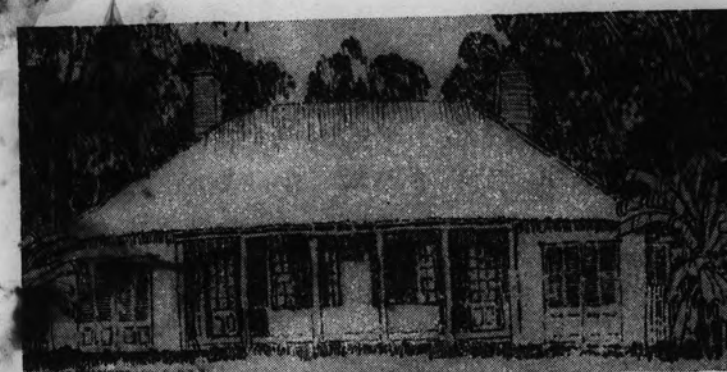
Week end, sent me their rough sketch, boiled down to useable size, of the Joyous Coast sketch. It was on tissue paper, which a hard pencil was employed, the salient features seemed to conform to my larger design but there needed to be some adjustments made in the lettering, etc., much of which I succeeded in getting into the form and style I wanted. As I understand it, this will be transcribed with ink, and if so, and the thing seems suitable for such purposes, we might have it photographed before returning it to Rock Hall for final execution. We shall see, perhaps it would be better to return the sketch to them directly, after it is submitted to me, asking them to forward it to you sometime during the manufacturing process. I suppose that would still give us ample opportunity to prepare publicity prior to the release of the plates themselves.

Mr. M. said he talked with Milei this morning. The ladies said it was raining down there, but as they are "danglers to boite glasse", I suppose the condition of the weather doesn't matter.

Must begin giving thought to the "last" mail, for the night is balmy and the tender wear department is going to start parking over time shortly.

0030

6202



YUCCA HOUSE

MELROSE PLANTATION  
MELROSE, LOUISIANA

Thursday, July 23rd, 1953.

memorandum:

How nice to find your gay letter of Saturday in this morning's post.

It was nice to learn that you, too, are enjoying a go at Tender Leaf. I suppose the new heights to which your local thermometers were sailing had a tendency to present the Tender Leaf under most advantageous auspices. My radio today speaks of showers in the New York-New Jersey area, so I reckon there may perhaps be a break for that area in the heat wave, I hope.

And may I thank you most sincerely for setting me straight on several points regarding the Prudhomme clan. It comes to hand at such an appropriate time, just before the final sketch starts to jell. Thanks to your unfailing brilliance of mind, these points, --spelling, dates, etc., will be flown along to Rock Hall, hard on the heels of the returned sketch which went forward today, and so will reach la Compagnie in ample time to be adjusted properly.

The search for correct spellings and dates is among the more confusing things I can think of. In the Matchitechen records Phaneer is sometimes spelled with an "p", Emanuel, as you pointed out, sometimes with one "n" sometimes with two. Another one of Pierre Emanuel's sons has his name spelled three ways in three different property transfers, --Achille, Archille and Achilles.

There are two or three local citizens of color on Melrose bearing the name of Archillius, and thus the confusion grows down through the successive generations, which is no wonder, what with the white man starting off the business with his own name spelled three ways in the same volume of legal documents. Had you not written in regard to these points, however, I should have let the thing slide along, I am so accustomed to hearing the



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particulars in such varying ways, but it is my wish to get everything just as correct as possible as it will finally appear in this sixth volume of the cane river history, that I am tremendously indebted to you for lending me such a generous hand.

I was so delighted to discover that you and I were both listening to Charles Jellingwood when he mentioned the death of Elaire Sellos. It seems so natural, somehow, that we both should have been equally struck by the epitaph, as recited by Mr. Jellingwood, and reported by each of us in our exchange of letters.

I learned of J. A.'s interest in Maude Adams when the other night at supper, he mentioned that she had died and that he had seen her in Peter Pan in 1915. It seems she had a wealthy girl friend living in Fort Gibson, Miss., where, in 1915, J. A. was attending Chamberlain-Hunt school. In deference to her friend, Miss Adams had given a special performance of Peter Pan at a Vicksburg theatre. J. A. said he could not recall how it was that he and a couple of friends happened to have box seats, but he did recall that so soon they got done out of the box and so viewed the performances on crates installed for them in the aisle.

And thanks for telling me about the Margaret Reese--Townsend business. I had heard a day or two ago that the Acting Prime Minister had remarked in Parliament that the gossip might now be set at rest because of something or other which I didn't catch, what with a thunder storm convulsing the ether waves. That, --and that was nothing,-- was all that I had heard, and so your information was most illuminating. Like you, I am holding the thought the two of them have the courage to follow the pattern of their uncle. I am reminded of the interesting phenomenon that nieces so often find parallels to their uncles, as one generation succeeds another. Odd, in this instance, isn't it?

Perhaps I should pause to knock wood as I report that during the past 24 hours we haven't had any rain. It has been a cloudless day and quite warm. A waxing moon at this moment is silencing the broad, dew-glistening leaves of the banana plants, and it will be a pleasure, half an hour hence, to mark the star as the sun sets over the magnolia in the avant-cour, near by the big pot, where I shall sip for a pleasant half hour a long glass of tender mint.

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6204



YUCCA HOUSE

MELROSE PLANTATION  
MELROSE, LOUISIANA

Friday, July 24th, 1953.

Memorandum:

Not this memo but the two enclosed letters are the interesting thing.

This is the only time in our correspondence of years that names have been substituted for Nora and Lottie. Before the rener leaf hour arrives, I shall knock off a letter, not to "amee but to Nora, don't you think so.

I am glad to see that the letter written on the day following the "blue" one seems to indicate that Nora has broken through again. I am naturally delighted, too, that Nora liked Yucca, too.

We have had a curious day and tonight seems equally so. At the moment, for instance, a nice fat moon is shining radiantly in the Southern sky as a gentle rain plays a tattoo on the broad surfaces of the banana leaves. A couple of times during the day, the same thing occurred, --brilliant sunshine as little showers descended from over head. I reckon the rainbows must have been lovely. For the first time in my life, I find myself wondering if a full moon would ever give sufficient intensity of light to produce a rainbow. I suppose not.

It goes without saying that the humidity stands at about 100 these days and while the thermometer touches the mid 90's during the day, it has a way of falling to the mid 70's at night, and unlike urban dwellers, people in the country, as you know, get the advantage of the sudden drops in the thermometer which the asphalt, concrete and steel never allow in cities.

My telephone rang this evening. A familiar voice from across the fence announced that the ladies were back from Biloxi. They reported that in spite of daily showers, everything was lovely at the hotel where they vacationed. It is said that J. A. was in Alexandria "on business", undoubtedly.



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6205



Friday, July 26th, 1953

I was talking with K. E. Williams today. He said he had recently had occasion to go over some of the Achille Prudhomme deeds recently and that he had noticed in the county court records in three different conveyances, the name was spelled "Archil", "Achilles" and "Achille". Determined to settle the matter to his own satisfaction by consulting one of the ante bellum maps, issued by the government, and the plats so contrived as to carry the name of each owner written on each holding, he was wonderfully impressed to find all the names of the Prudhommess written out in full, such as Pierre Emanuel Prudhomme, Jean Baptiste Prudhomme, Lestan Prudhomme, Phandor Prudhomme, Marcisse Prudhomme and so on, but to the last one for which he was searching, where upon he couldn't help giggling, for in bold letters it stood, the only one bearing not the whole name but the initial, --"A. Prudhomme".

On the Joyous Coast plate it will appear as Achille Prudhomme, -- thanks to little Miss Lee, and never will she glance at the plate that she will fail to realize that without her sure touch, the research involved would never have been perfect.

Naturally I relished the Collingwood remarks on Senator McCarthy tonight, and the blast from Banker Eisenhower, is heartening. I had heard tell of the Eisenhower brother, -- Milton, but I did not chance to know about the Kansas City one, if that is where he hails from. I perhaps remarked to you, following Sunday night's meet the Regs program, in which the Senator appeared, that I gathered from the radio personality that McCarthy is definitely insane, that brand of mental confusion possessed by so many people, from Hitler all along the line, -- sufficiently clever to escape the asylum and thus capable of doing such tremendous evil. The Lord knows many a Mong could be vindictive enough to those opposing him politically but while he definitely was a carck-pot, he did not, so far as I know, have that horrible instinct to persecute people regardless, as seems to be one of the main characteristics of McCarthy if Senators Bricker, McCarran and McCarthy could all drop dead, decent government certainly wouldn't be the poorer.

But now it's time to write Moxa and a couple of non-descript epistles. The rain has topped and the moon is "radiant and lovely, Queen of the night".....

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6206



YUCCA HOUSE

MELROSE PLANTATION  
MELROSE, LOUISIANA

Sunday, July 26th, 1953.

Memorandum:

It has been a quiet week end in these parts and often I have found my thoughts turning Manhattanward, hoping there might be a measure of the same commodity where ever little Miss Lee might be finding herself.

On Saturday noon we had our usual mid day shower which has become a customary point on the agenda to such a pitch that today, when the big old thunder heads rolled up on every side, spilling much water, it is said both at Perry and Bayou Machez, it seemed as though something must be a little out of joint when not a drop, in spite of all the heavenly rumbling, never fell on this bend of the river.

A little after 2 o'clock this afternoon there was one tremendous crash, the kind of a thunder clap that sounds like the ripping of cloth on a gigantic scale, and I assume it must have struck somewhere nearby. A few minutes later the bamboo hedge parted and a couple of negro youths came rushing across the White Garden. Across the fence from Arenbourg, and just behind the honkey-tonk, a baseball game had been going on and the 2nd base man had been flattened out by the bolt. I was the only one on the plantation within reach of a telephone and they had come to ask me if I thought a doctor should be summoned or if the victim should be rushed to the hospital. I thought it a good idea to go and have a look for myself before deciding if a physician or a mortician were needed. I found the victim sitting up and although he spoke with difficulty, he did manage to say

"I feel dizzy in the head."



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If anyone is going to feel dizzy, I suppose the head is as good a place to experience that sensation as any.

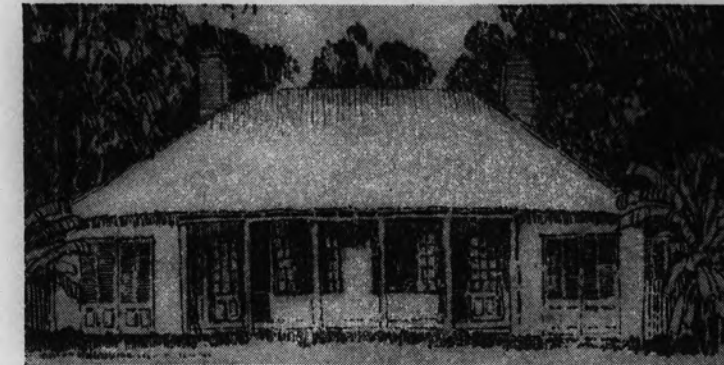
I was hemmed in by 30 or 40 black faces, all fascinated by the phenomenon they had just witnessed, and after I had made the surrounding mob enlarge their encircling barrier a little, the patient seemed to breathe a little easier. As so often happens in the inexplicable with colored people, there seemed to be no accounting for the condition of the youth. Obviously he had not been struck since, had he been, he wouldn't be feeling dizzy in the head. What had probably happened can be charged off to a bolt having fallen dangerously close to him to such proximity that it had knocked him down, and perhaps the fall had stunned him, and he, like many people before him, was probably that amazed when he came to and found himself alive. I recommended that he find some quiet place where he could spend the balance of the afternoon resting. There is a big dance up the road tonight, and were + to pass that way right now, I shouldn't be surprised to find him swinging out at the head of the cotillion.

Saturday's post was light. It included a letter from Daisy in the Bell, a portion of which I enclose, for I have destroyed the second page, in accordance with her request, although it contained nothing that referred to anybody by name. The reason she wanted it disposed of was due to the fact that without mentioning her mother's name, she pointed out that her plans for her vacation depended on several factors, including one in particular, having to do with the necessity that she finds she has to make more and more decisions in behalf of her mother, etc., etc. I am sending along the first page, however, thinking you would be interested in reading what she has to say about the book containing regrettable references to somebody. I have no idea to whom she refers unless it be weeks. If Lyle is the person she has in mind, nothing in print could worry him at this late date, and therefore I assume it must be that new Aberia number that she has so carefully avoided mentioning.

Matenitoones is going through the excitement of a Baptist revival and the revivalist with several of his assistants came for a tour during the afternoon. He was taking many three dimensional photographs in color. I have never seen any of these pictures but according to the preacher, - a gay blade, they are wonderful. I'm surprised his religion, so called, permits him to do anything so worldly as to take pictures on Sunday....

6208

6208



YUCCA HOUSE MELROSE PLANTATION  
MELROSE, LOUISIANA  
Monday, July 27th, 1936.

memorandum:

new nice to find your gift package in country post. It traveled in perfect condition and, thanks to your expert packing, arrived precisely as it was sent.

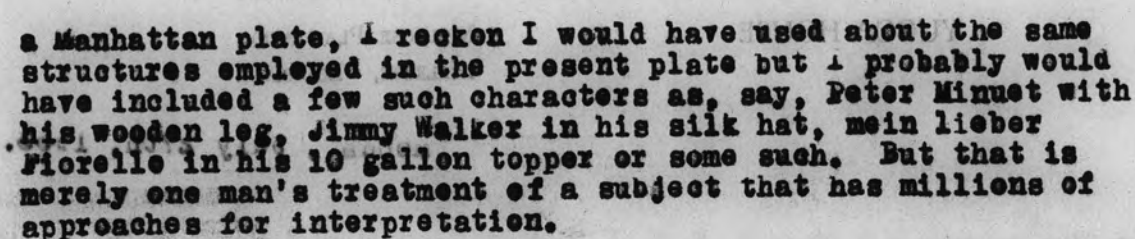
It is so kind of you to provide me with this information acquainting me with what is coming. The modern lines of the porcelain world. The broad center and the narrow edge appear perfectly adapted for making the most space for the decorative subject matter. The item is designed to embrace the subject matter selected for appearance on the plate seems excellent, too, and the placing of these several subjects in relation to the one to the other, strikes me as being excellent.

For me, the interest in the individual buildings would have been increased if dates had been added to the legends. The one feature incorporated in the composition, as viewed in its entire arrangement is the breaking of the encircling design around the rim of the plate to introduce the words "City of New York". Personally, I should have preferred these words in a cartouche within the framework of the pictorial section, leaving the edge of the plate to carry its design unbroken, thus keeping intact the frame which the outer design provides.

Contemplation of such a composition seems to impel one to naturally to examine the work itself while at the same time one is inclined to consider what different treatment he would have employed. As for myself, in making the Cape River series, I suppose that subconsciously, although I don't recall thinking of the point until this minute, that I was perhaps influenced by that line of the Prince de Ligne: - "A landscape bereft of a human figure is like the end of the world". Had I been doing



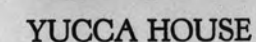
6209



So that as it may, I am delighted to have this example of what is going on in the field of decorative plates and I shall install it on the shelf of the Jean Baptiste Metoyer book case where I shall see it every day a half dozen times as I pass by it, -- blessing little Miss Lee the while for having so thoughtfully provided me with such an inspiration.

And speaking of inspirations, I didn't get around yesterday to mention the "Invitation to Learning" discussion of the book by Dr. Schweitzer on Sunday. As was just and proper, it seemed to me, no particular book from the Schweitzer pen was gone into very deeply. Somebody ought to write an essay, the like of which I have never seen, in which there will be much speculation on this point, or these opening points: a book sometimes makes its author famous whereas in juxtaposition, a famous man gives lustre to any book he writes. Such seems to me to be the case of any volume coming from the Schweitzer pen, for whether such a volume be last, 3rd or 2nd rate, it isn't the book that matters but the impact of a great personality on the part of any reader through the medium of what appears in print, -- any subject matter thus set forth being secondary in importance to the closer intimacy it provides the reader with the writer. I suppose I have already speculated on a parallel point in painting, as for example, the case of Gilbert Stuart who is probably much more widely known because he painted George Washington than because he was one of the best American painters of the 18th century in America. And the reverse of this is equally true, as is evidenced by the fact that millions of people have heard of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, simply because Gainsborough happened to do her portrait. Without touching on the qualities of Schweitzer's writings, their value will always rest not so much on their subject matter as upon the marvelous character of the man who wrote them; this wasn't precisely the conclusion of the Bryson conclusion but it more or less represents the conclusion I reached. We rained today but quite a few pilgrims and quite a lot of gardening, etc. . . .

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MELROSE PLANTATION  
MELROSE, LOUISIANA

6210

Tuesday, July 28th, 1953.

Memorandum:

The enclosure suggests that perhaps my letter to the library of Congress may eventually bear some fruit on the invitation to learning thing. I felt like congratulating Mr. Patterson on the speed taken to respond to my letter of June 20th. The fact that he mentions having copies of some back numbers of invitation to learning on his desk suggests that he has not been conversant with this program before my letter brought up the matter.

but even though Mr. 'Attenson has been twaddling in response to his correspondence, it must be agreed that Mr. Bryson is guilty of even greater dilatoriness, for not a peep has come from that direction as yet. Perhaps Mr. Bryson feels that his business is to air the programs and not to settle any policy of the Columbia system and accordingly finds it better to avoid expressing himself on the point raised. I have not had time to read and speaking of books, I am just starting one that so has as though it might be by N. J. Barrow or perhaps N. J. Barrow of some such. It is on a journey into wonder and the first four or five chapters suggest that it is going to be a popular scientific approach to a flock of things. The beginning has to do with the four voyages of Columbus, with a flock of references to other trippers across the Atlantic in early days, - John Cabot, five years after Columbus, and a couple of gentlemen of Venice who left quite a record and a map of their journey to North America, via Greenland, along about 1390, which seems pretty early as compared with the Columbus venture in 1492. The book is entertaining, and I shall probably speak of other items appearing in it before I am finished.



6210

6211



YUCCA HOUSE

A while back, Dr. Nana asked me if I would do him a special favor sometime by giving an hour to one of his patients a woman burdened by ample funds and no end of time whom he was trying to treat by finding something for her to do.

With these other women, she arrived unannounced at noon today. Fortunately Sam Pease had the sense to tell her I was a dinner whereupon the party betook itself on an exploration jaunt of St. Augustin's church and grave yard. They were back again by one o'clock and ready for a tour. It was among the more amusing ones I ever attempted to shepherd, what with everybody "busy as hell", flying around in every direction, each one interested in everything that did not catch the eye of any of the others. What with everybody concentrating on four different points at the same moment, and lingering over each just about as long as a grasshopper would linger over a straw before jumping for a toothsome blade of grass just beyond, the amount of fascination manifested by each pilgrim, centering for a minute on whatever came to view, and then leaping on, was something that suggested a quartet of bodies, functioning by perpetual motion in an out of doors lunatic asylum. Apparently the woman who had formerly labored under the name of no interest and suddenly transformed her attitude into the opposite, consumed with curiosity about everything and had come up by infecting all her associates. She asked me what I thought of her problem. I told her frankly I could understand her former need for a hobby but now I was convinced she needed to hobble said hobby and begin devoting herself to not more than a dozen things at any given moment. She and her companions whooped and hollered at that one, whereupon I pushed them on to the gallery, gave them a glass of wine which apparently made swift in-roads on them, for, as I learned later, they hadn't dined as yet, and they finally departed with reluctance as I, while saying goodbye, was doing some mental arithmetic as to how many hundred dollars a visit a psychiatrist should charge them for a professional hour's work on them.

On the home front we have had two days without rain. Juanita continues recuperating and we continue dining across the fence. Instinctively I seem to be bracing myself against the coming week end when I suppose Winks will descend on us in force, but sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof, and with this gay thought I turn to the Tenderleaf DEPARTMENT.

6212

6212



YUCCA HOUSE

MELROSE PLANTATION  
MELROSE, LOUISIANA

Wednesday, July 29th, 1953.

Memorandum

Another day without rain and it all seems so remarkable. It is hot and cloudless, too, with drenching dews at night so that the cotton is advancing wonderfully and everything on our side of the fence looking as crisp and green as one could envision in the first flush of Spring.

The whiter hyacinthes in the big pot have been blooming for weeks but those in St. Giggins' fountain have just started coming into flower. For some reason the plants in the big pot have put up leaves only 6 or 8 inches above the surface of the water while those in St. Giggins' stand perhaps a foot and a half or two feet, completely concealing the Saint and putting out purple flags that are inordinately delicate and lovely above the hard, rusty circle of the basin.

The morning's post brought a letter from Postell, in response to an inquiry from me, asking about his plans for the summer and asking him to let me know if I could have been wrong in my memory of years past when I learned about Philip and his appraised worth at seventy five cents. It seemed was wrong, since he was set down as valued at twenty five cents instead of seventy five. I'm so glad I included good old Philip on the Joyous Coast plate. The Prudhommes may have called him insane but by giving him a two bit value, they proved that Philip wasn't the only one who was wacky.

And speaking of the Prudhommes, I was sorry to learn that in the big economy drive now going on in the Post Office Department, several rural offices in the Parish are scheduled for obliteration, Bermuda being on the list. I have no idea as to the merits of that particular case, but I shall be sorry indeed if the Bermuda office is suppressed, for the Alphonse Prudhommes who own Oakland and run the Post Office there are kindly and ineffectual people who have long leaned heavily upon the fifteen hundred dollars a year that Post Office supplies them, and I



6213

fear they will find themselves terribly pinched if that should be cut off.

And mention of Prudhommes reminds me that I had something about other plantations I wanted to mention. I learned from Ora the other day that her brother-in-law, J. M. Williams has a weekly pay roll averaging from \$9,000.00 to \$10,000.00 a week. This sum, multiplied by the 52 weeks in the year somehow brings the figure to a more impressive figure than one usually associates with mechanized plantations. And there is a natural sequence in mentioning J. M. Williams so hard on the heels of Alphonse Prudhomme, for Alphonse Prudhomme is one of the most civilized, kindest person one is ever likely to find, with a Cane River plantation that brings him in nothing and only by sipping at every turn can he maintain lovely old Oakland while J. M. Williams is a perfect wizard at plantation operation, turning over more money than perhaps anybody in the Parish and so dumb in everything else that outside of his office, he is like a fish out of water. How unfortunate that these two Cane River residents can't share a little with each other of the two prime attributes each is possessed of in such ample amounts.

On the political plane, the present precarious state of Senator Taft's health gives one pause again as to the wisdom of political parties giving more than cursory thought to the selection of a Vice President. Had Mr. Taft been nominated and elected,....

And the mention of the Vice Presidency reminds me of the statement made by an otherwise seemingly sane pilgrim yesterday:

"I am from California, the same State that gave the nation that splendid young man, Vice President Nixon. Such a fine young man and how fortunate we people of California are that when he ran for the Senate, he beat that Mrs. Helen Douglas, for, as Mr. Nixon always said, 'She was a red'. Imagine, --Helen Douglas a red. And then it occurred to me the opposition ought to counter with some equally brief label for their political foes, giving them some color name, --such as 'that horrible creature, Nixon, so yellow' or some such."

Well, so much for a glance at things from this bend of the river. My thermometer stands at 92 and something tells me that Tender Leaf is going to taste mighty good in about 10 minutes, thanks to little Miss Lee.....

6214

Thursday, July 30th, 1953.

Memorandum

Now nice to find your Saturday afternoon letter in this morning's post.

And thanks for telling me about the stationary. I should have given thought to using it sparingly in the memo department, and I suppose it was that semi-realization that impelled me to leave ample margin on the reverse side of each sheet so that the top of the sheet could be snipped off without slashing into the text. I am hoping you will find this can be accomplished readily, and because I have already grown so accustomed to the heading that delights me so much, I shall always keep a sheet of it here on my desk along side Dr. Underwood and, as of the present moment, I shall keep my attention glued on it as I indulged in our nightly chats.

As the date for the celebration of the nuptials approaches, I can well imagine the hustle and bustle that probably characterizes the local scene on the home front. The forest hills nest sounds high enough for what it is being used. Personally, I was never much on living in the suburbs if one has to work in town, for after the costs of rent plus transportation plus time spent in travel, and I guess most of all, the thought of being goaded twice a day by the worry about getting a train on time never seemed to counter-balance whatever the suburbs had to offer. By now, I suppose, the subway goes out that far, so the time limit, at least, on travel doesn't enter into the consideration.

And speaking of transit matters, may I thank you for having let me investigate the new token that entitles one to a ride on the metropolitan transit system. I was moved to merriment by your remark as to the similarity of size as between this 15 cent item and the piece of European currency of much less value. And at the same time, I was entranced at the hole stamped in the token, for it reminded me of like tokens we used to use in Paris for the bus. Most of us kids used to appropriate a big old safety pin from the remote section of our respective establishments, and slinging a ring of these tokens on the safety pin, attach the thing to a seam in our over-coats so we never had to go milling around for change to satisfy the busman. As I recall, we had an



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arrangement that depended on a particular make of safety pin that permitted about 3 tokens to slide over some twist in the thing, and we always tried to keep the balance of the pin well stocked, and even if we ran short of the ever changing supply, we always could fall back on the three which were especially wedged into the pin. As a safety item, this reserve was marvelous in the assurance it gave but one day it nearly wrecked the busman when I ran out of my surplus, and he and I tried to extract one of the three reserve items which somehow just wouldn't let themselves be dis-entangled from the Chinese puzzle the safety pin had become, after too much use. It was evident enough to everyone that I was amply furnished with require transportation costs, but the trick was trying to extract same without giving up my peignoir.

Mr. Rogers came to see me today. He is the Alexandria man who is interested in painting. He brought a couple of things to show me which he liked very much. One was a little painting from Clemence's inimitable brush and the other was a bed quilt made somewhat after the manner of the Cane River Gobelin. Clemence had been coming to sketch it for several days. Interruption. I think I was talking about Clemence's handiwork. Mr. Rogers had purchased a quilt she had made, similar to the one on the Yucca gallery. He said he had given her an order for two more. He pays her fifty dollars a piece, and says he has in mind for her to do a half dozen more. Thus the Cane River Gobelin is serving a purpose other than that of being purely decorative, and of course I am entranced that Clemence can round up an occasional check to go along with her old age pension. For some time I have been thinking that perhaps Cousin Ouida might be interested in a Cane River Gobelin for her shop. If she comes in August, she can make up her mind after seeing the original.

A book came to hand yesterday which inclined me toward putting aside what I was reading and have a go at the new comer. It is "The World of Eli Whitney" by Allen Nevitt and somebody. I read but a few pages and found it entrancingly set forth. The ground work centers around the inception of steam power in the 1760's, and does an excellent appraisal of various 18th century personalities, such as Voltaire, and a first rate account of what the Encyclopaedia was all about. An interesting point at the beginning was the reference to the single meeting that ever occurred between Eli Whitney and Thomas Paine, both experts in revolution, since the American and probably, therefore, the French revolution could not have come off without Tom Paine and the Industrial Revolution which was so much a child of Whitney. I suppose it wasn't to be expected, but nevertheless regrettable that neither man "got" the other. That was in 1802 when Paine's work was done and Whitney's just getting under full steam. So much to talk about, such a happy day, thanks to little Miss Lee.....

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6216

Friday, July 31st, 1953.

Memorandum:

The big news of the day, of course, is the death of Senator Taft. The key note of most of the eulogies I have heard over the air seems to be the stressing of the fact that although many of the speakers disagreed with him, Senator Taft honestly stated what he really believed. No wonder he is being praised as an extraordinary politician.

I can't say that I subscribe to these opinions but after all, my prejudice was along ago strongly set forth. I never did believe that Mr. Taft had the best interests of the country at large in mind when he played politics so mightily with preparedness in the late 1920's when F. D. R. was striving so vigorously to get the United States into some sort of a military garb that would stave off Nazi aggression which obviously would have swept the world if the United States had not prevented it. As I recall, Senator Taft declared, in fighting tooth and nail against military preparedness, that it would be time enough to think of such matters after the Nazis had started dropping bombs on American cities. That is a sample of a Taft statement which I cannot believe was the man's honest conviction. And when he was forever fighting, after the war, to remove price controls on food and rents, he couldn't have been honest when he said he believed if all price restrictions were eliminated, prices would automatically seek out a just and lower level. It may be that he did honestly believe such things, but if he really did, then it is obvious that he was so cock-eyed in his mental processes that he shouldn't have had the impressive power that his position in Congress accorded him.

One thing is incontestable, it is lucky he didn't get the nomination and selection as President of the United States, and especially if Nixon had been selected as his running mate. Of course we still could have a President Nixon, but I shudder to think of such a rascal in the Presidential chair.

Well, so much for things on the national level, and I must jog along to touch on a local ripple that is heartening. By chance, I saw Bill Jones' brother the



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other day when I was about to post the sketch of the

Joyous Coast sketch to Rock Hall. I showed him the thing, pointing out the presence in the design of the Francois Mignoux house which, as you know, is today the property of the estate of Carroll Jones, and controlled by the Jones brothers. Although the house now serves as a tenant refuge and is vastly neglected, I thought it wise to include it in the design on the "vague" hope that its presence on the plate might inspire somebody to ponder on its present precarious position.

In view of this, you can readily imagine how enchanted I was this morning when I chanced to see Bill Jones at the store and out of a clear sky, he said:

"Oh, by the way, my brother tells me you are including the old house in the Bermuda plate you are doing, and my brother says that if he makes a good crop this year, he is certainly going to restore the old place."

I think this is the first time I ever knew of a mulatto manifesting any interest in an ante bellum home under his custodianship, and naturally I am delighted at the prospect of the reform plantation house being rescued from ruin.

On the home front, we are all looking forward with vast anticipation to Juanita's return to the Fort and Pan Department on Monday. A week after her return from the Gulf Coast, Celeste confided to me today that since they had but three women to look after things in her house, it was just too much to expect them to give two extra people supper and three dinners. I gather it is a terrible nerve strain to attempt the triple role of plantation mistress, road runner and card player all at the same time. Little does Juanita suspect how much she has been missed during the past week.

I haven't heard anything as yet regarding Wenk elements that may drop in to poison the creek end. I did learn the other day that they contemplate buying a much larger house in Shreveport and that they are waiting about to dispose of their present residence in view of purchasing one on a grander scale. Let us hold the breath these transactions will keep them busy for at least another month when, following Labor Day, at least the offspring will be tuning their faces toward school.....

6218

6218

Sunday, August 2nd, 1933.

Memorandum:

now true is the old adage suggesting that the most difficult bridges to cross are those we construct in our imagination and never actually encounter physically.

I had anticipated a shambling sort of week end whereas it turned out most peaceful.

perhaps it seemed especially so because there were so few pilgrims in spite of the pleasant weather. It is true there were people from Dallas and from Florida and the hands from Alexandria and Shreveport and the Agriellas from Hatchitoches, not to mention a couple dozen people or color dropping in for this or that. But in spite of such goings and comings, the pattern was so pleasant and so unlike the anticipated week thing, that it all has seemed wonderfully peaceful.

I did a bit of reading last night and was able to keep awake a little longer than usual, due in part, perhaps, to the fact that I was anxious to read more and more about Eli Whitney. I expect the book would not be very popular because its filler is a little over stocked for the casual reader, but for myself, it is proving to be excellent fare and my understanding of the troubles besetting the patents on the cotton gin and Whitney's subsequent inauguration of modern industrial methods in America gave me an understanding of the period around 1800 that has too long needed to be etched in more clearly in my mind.

and the whole rumpus that went on about the cotton gin resulted in Whitney getting little or nothing from his patent, although its invention brought unimaginable millions to America, but as has so often happened in everyone's life, a disappointment in one field was requisite to produce vast success in another, and had it not been for the cotton gin, Whitney would probably never have been the vast success he was in his subsequent efforts at manufacturing on a prodigious scale. Perhaps it is this realization that makes the book doubly interesting.



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now that the eulogies, inevitably so lowing hard  
on the heels of any public figure, are beginning to  
taper off, we may soon expect to hear a flock of interpretations  
of the place history will assign Mr. Taft as the dominant figure  
on the republican side of the senate during the past two or  
three decades. Somebody remarked that in spite of the fact  
that Mr. Taft would demonstrate amazing inconsistencies by  
vigorously supporting one side of a policy issue one week, and  
then turn right around and with equal vigor, support the  
opposite view the following week, he somehow, through that  
very vigor, convey the impression that he was demonstrating  
honest thinking. There was also the fact that although  
he gave encouragement to Senator McCarthy to initiate smear  
campaigns and character assassinations, everybody inclined to  
hold McCarthy solely responsible and nobody ever thought of  
mentioning Taft as sharing in such outrageous doings. Another  
paradox was Taft's ability to roll up large majorities of votes  
when he campaigned for a Senatorial seat and yet in spite of  
the fact that people resented his Old Guardisms on many  
public questions, he never ceased demonstrating his defiance  
of public popularity, --or was it bull-headedness that impelled  
him to alienate enough people to prevent him from obtaining  
the Presidential nomination which, apparently, he longed for most  
during his entire political career. I guess the best short  
sentence covering the man, runs something like this:

"Mr. Taft, the man who would rather be wrong than be  
resistant."

It seems so long since last we heard from Peaceable  
Street that the enclosed note brings a glimpse, too long  
denied, from that direction.

And while on the subject of ladies in literature, I  
trust you had the pleasure of hearing today's invitation to Learning  
and the go they had at the short stories of Katherine  
Mansfield. Everyone I know who has read Miss Mansfield liked  
her work. As for myself, never having been much on short  
stories, I have only turned through a few of them in times gone by  
when, perhaps, other circumstances prevented me from catching their  
full value on the initial reading. And so Miss Mansfield  
remains pretty much an unknown quantity in my mind.

But the hour approaches the magical moment when Miss Martha  
Roundtree will preside over another session of her Meet the Press  
programs, and I must accordingly brace myself for same. I  
think it has rained in Manhattan today. I hope you found  
a few free moments just for you....

1883

6220

Monday, August 3rd, 1953.

Memorandum:

Up and down the road it rained at high noon, but  
passed Melrose by with only a fleeting shadow.

But there was quite a cascade of pilgrims, some by  
appointment, some not, and on tomorrow's agenda at 10 a.m.  
is Mrs. Wagner and her widowed daughter in law. This  
will be the first time I have seen la Wagner in perhaps  
ten years.

It was so pleasant seeing Juanita, flanked by her two  
offspring, gracing the culinary department at breakfast  
time. I suppose Juanita's presence on this side of the fence  
must have brought as much delight on the other side of the  
barrier as on this side, although for quite different reasons.  
The never tension continues taught over there. But even  
the unpleasant sensation radiating from over-wrought nerves can  
not prevent concealed amusement on occasion. In view of the  
week the ladies spent on the Gulf Coast and the flights up and  
down the road during the past week, including Alexandria on  
Friday, bridge in town on Saturday, movies in town on Sunday and  
the word knows how many social calls in between, as from plantation  
to plantation and to town, it was slightly on the hilarious side,  
when I asked Celeste if she wanted to drive to Shreveport  
with him this morning, stay for lunch and return home in the afternoon,  
Celeste opined in a neglected air:

"I can't think of any reason why I should take such a trip  
to Shreveport, but since I never get a chance to go anywhere, I  
suppose I had better go."

And of course she did.

"Since I never get a chance to go anywhere....." is  
a line so remarkable from such a source that I cannot restrain myself  
from repeating it to demonstrate the cock-eyed concepts that  
seem to permeate all minds and personalities having anything to  
do with Melrose, and that includes me, I suppose. But I  
hope I don't ever feel quite that sorry for myself as to set forth  
such a silly statement.



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6221

One side light on the life of Senator Taft came to the surface as news to me this evening when some commentator pointed out that perhaps a suitable memorial to the senator might be in the form of a fund for research on cancer. Twice, according to this report, Senator Taft has voted against granting federal funds for cancer research, the money which took his own life and it was pointed out that four Senators in the past couple of years had died of the same affliction, - Wary, Robey, Vandenburg and Macmahon. Billions for creating A-bombs which haven't caused anyone's death since 1945 but not one cent for cancer research, although two hundred fifty thousand died of it every year since 1945. I must say these extremes do seem to merit some closer approach to a balance.

What with only a couple more disks remaining covering the career of Eli Whitney, I find myself experiencing that peculiar sensation which you, too, have often felt, perhaps, on approaching the close of a book which you have found so informative that you regret another volume of equal size isn't awaiting the end of the first. At the present writing, I haven't married off the hero of the biography, and I guess perhaps I shall never get him into a state of wedded bliss. I am mindful of the fact that his heir and that heir's heir continued the Whitney business down through three generations until the Whitney business was sold to Winchester Arms, but since he hasn't much time left for getting married and raising a family, I am beginning to suspect he may have adopted one or more of his sister's children in lieu of any of his own, but at this stage, that is merely a guess.

Mrs. Miller, --the one time Mrs. Nathaniel Green, writes him from Georgia, --Mr. Whitney being in New Haven, -- that on the road between Charleston and Savannah, she picked up a couple little boys starving to death, --English lads dumped by a Captain of a boat on American soil and as they are nice children, Mr. Whitney "simply must" take them, and the lady inquires the best way for her to send them to him in Connecticut. What with his own nephews and a flock of apprentices on his hands, this old bachelor seemed to be getting more than his share of other people's children to raise.

A letter from "Humid Rock Hall" responds to my request for an opinion regarding a New Orleans plate. The reaction is against any such possibility, what with too many already having been turned out. My suggestion as what might or might not be expected from an Uncle Tom's Cabin item was all in the affirmative. Perhaps there haven't been so many of such items devoted to la Stowe's opus. At first I thought of doing it unrelated to the Cane River series, but now perhaps I shall tack on the river, with something else literary to balance it later. I shall ponder on Uncle Tom for a while anyway....

8888

P. S.

The recent clipping about Marie Therese, undated, was from the St. Louis Post Dispatch, I believe. Rosalind referred to it, perhaps, in a letter a couple of months back.

6222

Tuesday, August 4th, 1953.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your pre-nuptial letter in today's post. I can well imagine what a busy week end it must have been and I am hoping everything went off swimmingly, --without too many floods.

I know not why this marriage gives me such a feeling of comfort but I suppose it is because I am under the impression that it will mean the little one will, by the act, soar out on her own wings, and that her mama will experience a measure of satisfaction in realizing one of her major jobs in life has been finished, so far as she is concerned. If she can only have years of comparatively smooth sailing straight ahead, how wonderful that will be.

We didn't get our noon rain today, the sky remaining cloudless for the past 24 hours. I am glad it was so pleasant during the morning when Madam Wagner passed this way. Her daughter-in-law is a nice person and the three children, although of the harum-scarum age, didn't get into too much mischief.

I think la Wagner went away well moved by her visit. She told me, as she was strolling toward the front gate, that the reason she hadn't been here since the Madam's passing was because she felt instinctively that things would be so changed and that she would be so depressed about it. But, she went on to explain, and to shed a couple of modest tears, she discovered that during the interim of her absence, she had forgotten how lovely the place could be and to her utter amazement, she found things looking so much more beautiful than she had remembered them that she was leaving with an earnest desire to come back and spend a day with me as soon as her daughter-in-law and grandchildren head back to Knoxville, Tennessee. It is heartening to know that she wants to come back and I shall look forward to her next visit with pleasure, asking her to break bread with us and chat with me at Yucca before turning her loose in the library.



6223

I appreciate your suggestions regarding the handling of the final Joyous Coast sketch for photographing. I shall write Rock Hall tonight, requesting the sketch be forwarded to you as soon as the need for it in the manufacturing process is finished, which I suppose ought to be at least 4 weeks before the plates themselves are finished. This will provide us with ample time to fiddle with the photographs, -- at least a month, so we shall experience no mad rush in taking care of that detail. I can prepare a bit of publicity for the plate and put same on holding shelf, and the photographs can be added whenever convenient, and both the text and the picture forwarded to the publisher whenever the time seems proper. I should prefer to get the illustration into the newspapers about the 1st week in October so it may serve as a talking point just prior to the pre-holiday rush. After all, with at least six weeks required for the manufacturing, and another 10 to 14 days for shipment, I guess things will have to be rushed a little by Rock Hall if we get the merchandise by October 1st. I assume the finished or final sketch may be sent for my final approval by the middle of August, and six weeks from that magical date would bring us around to October, so perhaps it will be the middle of that month before the stuff is available. For local, - watermelons, - publicity, of holiday notices, and I suppose they will start beating the drum for the annual fire works and lighting features at least a couple of months in advance.

I shall try to have whatever text is printed to have it so fashioned as to direct attention to the Town of Watchitoches and the Cane River Country plates, for those should be the ones to appeal to more pilgrims than the new one about the Joyous Coast which is known to very few pilgrims, I imagine.

The enclosures are of no interest but I send them along regardless. Far be it from me to ask why little Miss Carolyn should have been taken herself to El Paso, or all places, to meet her friends. I'm a little uncertain about Texas geography, but I believe El Paso is about as far from Marshall as it could possibly be, and still fall within the limits of the Lone Star State. The sum total of all this flying about is that the Cane River article languishes and Texas hasn't the excuse for providing Miss Ramsey with articles of interest to publishers, so her ideas are frequently so good, her performances so nebular.....

6224

Wednesday, August 5th, 1933.  
memorandum:

It has been a long, hot, busy day, and I met a glacial impatience, for the Tender Leaf hour is calling me, and the iced beverage will restore a measure of vim and vigor when I have knocked off a few no-account letters and call it a day.

During the night, marauders made inroads on the local pear crop, breaking a few limbs and generally upsetting adjoining plants. I accordingly set three men to work at dark or dawn, divesting the trees of all their fruit, of which there was much.

The family of Love Williams, -- Love was killed in the automobile pile up here along in January or February, -- the family of Love simply will not give up attacking pear trees before the fruit gets ripe. So far as I am concerned, they could have the whole crop, but they are so aboriginal by nature that, if one pear remains on a tree, they can't rest until they have torn that particular tree and a half dozen adjoining plants to pieces in their united efforts to round up such a small prize. Their papa was a rogue who was forever breaking into the store or warehouse, and I recall once he stole, -- of all things, -- two dozen hoe handles and took them to a local hockey-tonk to trade same for a drink. J. W. being a shrewd business man, tolerates the depredations of the family because there are about a million kids ranging from 10 to 20 years of age, and twenty pairs of hands pick lots of cotton, come harvest time. Personally, I should never tolerate such trash on a place I owned, but then, when it comes to harvesting, I suppose I wouldn't have ample field hands either.

And so the pears are gathered from Melrose and the Williams outfit can look farther afield for this commodity. But they needn't look toward Arenburg, for, as I may have mentioned, some weeks back, that crop has already long since been disposed of.

The pilgrims passing this way were numerous today, and what with the group forever treading hard on the heels of the preceding the circulation was constant and the enervation still high.



1888

6225

I finished "The World of Eli Whitney" last night, and found the final page a splendid piece of writing. It is a summation of the emergence of the cotton belt, as a natural result of the Whitney invention, and detailed quite a symposium on what the salient aspects of the cotton belt embraced, --that strip of land about 300 miles wide and fifteen hundred miles long, stretching from the Ashley-Cooper on the East to the Rio Grande on the west.

And speaking of the Ashley-Cooper, I was impressed tonight when the radio began detailing the identity of prisoners released today by the Communists; when high on the list was some gentleman whose home address was given as Monck's Corner, South Carolina. Off hand my guess is that Monck's Corner didn't send too many soldiers to Korea, and assuming you may have heard the broadcast, too, I shouldn't be surprised if you and I were among the very few people around the world listening in who ever heard tell of the place.

Returning for a moment to Mr. Whitney, I want to remark he died about 1825. Vaguely it seems to me there were lots of exceptional people who died about 1825 and 1826, aside from Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, but off hand, I don't recall many exceptional people having been born in those years. What I wanted to remark upon, however, was the fact that the two or three nephews whom Mr. Whitney had raised and trained carried on his business successfully and that his only son, perhaps 5 or 6 when his father died, grew to man's estate and eventually took over his inheritance, operated by his uncles during his minority, and displayed the same capabilities in furthering the mass production mode of industry which his father had inaugurated on the American scene when he began his manufacturing career at the close of the 1700's. I expect there is nothing unusual about a son stepping into his father's shoes but I don't recall many who did so with unusual success who the death of the parent preceded the assumption of filial duties by such a long interim as was the case in the Whitney family.

I talked with Ora's daughter today. She is taking a bit of summer school at Watchtowers before returning to L. S. U. in September. Yesterday she slipped on a newly polished floor at school and had to have six stitches taken either just above or just below her right eye. She said she wouldn't have minded so much had she been on a frolic, but it seemed silly to round up such a scar in such a prosaic persunage of education.

And now I fold in the direction of the reader leaf although my thoughts will continue functioning even when the under-

1888

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Thursday, August 6th, 1953.

memorandum;

Full summer continues and although we missed the mid-day treat of a storm, the weather made up for lost time my massing stacks of thunder heads tonight, rattling and banging around, cutting the electric current during the Eisenhower speech, --but spilling not a drop of water.

The incoming mail was fairly ample but contained nothing of particular interest. The thin paper used by Kay seems odd for correspondence, and especially when both sides are used for dashing off a note. The old adage has it that "imagination rules the world" but I must say it appears may people seem bereft of this powerful commodity.

Among the post cards is one from a Mrs. Thompson of Wichita who is none other than Juanita Mack's aunt, supposedly a negress but with coloring sufficiently cafe au lait as to put her in the mulatto category.

As for the Kleisers, they seem to be in a class with many another person we seem to know, possessed of unusual ability to flit about the world at a great rate like Carolyn, they seem able to plan time-tables readily enough but after a while, one begins to realize that such schedules are more or less decorative things which are in no case designed for anybody's actual use.

Today's pilgrim assortment seemed mostly of Louisiana origin with some New Orleans people people who were especially pleasant. There were a few people from town who found themselves down this way and dropped off to say howdy. From one of them, I learned that James Aswell has started a new project on a portion of his acreage, not too far from Grand Score. Two or three years back, he beat the drum announcing a new real estate development embracing part of his land, to be known as St. Denis Heights, -- although the altitude isn't great.



6227

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But nothing much ever seemed to happen so far as conveying lots to anybody and hence this new project, tentatively styled Memoray Lane Cemetery. Lots for burial sites are being offered for sale but I know not if anyone has invested in one as yet. I am not sure he has been fortunate in his selection of a name, for off hand I get the impression the development might be a place to bury memories rather than people and somehow I get the impression that it is Memory Lane that is being provided with a burial site rather than a final resting place for human beings. I must confess I can but smile when I recall that James doesn't believe in sentiment and very politely but very pointedly assures me that he doesn't care for its presence in things I write, but he himself, ironically enough, turns to sentiment definitely enough when in trying to stir up a burial plot, reaches out and styles it Memory Lane Cemetery, -- proof positive, perhaps, that he is perfectly right, so far as he is concerned, in not making use of sentiment since, as in this instance, he demonstrates clearly enough that he doesn't know how to select a sentimental name appropriate to his purpose.

I found Clemence and Zelma waiting for me on the lucca gallery when I returned from the post office this morning. News had traveled about that the pear harvest had been effect yesterday and they were hoping they might get some. Each had brought along a good sized sack which, according to my way of thinking, would hold much more than they could eat. But I was mistaken. As you know, Clemence is no Spring chicken and although Zelma, who traveled the Bermuda Road for a piece one morning with little Miss Lee and me, is buxom enough, still, it is quite a piece from lucca to the lucca menage. I should like to have one of Clemence's canvases, depicting the two ladies heading out for their respective homes, each of them with a basket of pears over their shoulders. Zelma was particularly anxious to get some pears. Little King is very fond of them, and as he finished his 3 years military service a week ago last Monday, she is looking for him to put in an appearance any hour. In passing, I must say I find it gay that Zelma and I continue to speak of her offspring as "the little one", although he is actually about twice our size.

Dr. Knipmeyer's son, father of a child born on May 8th, has taken a job with an oil company near New Orleans, owned by the Schlumberger family. The husband and wife had their origins in Europe, -- one in Alsace, the other Lorraine, and the hilarious thing is that the husband pronounces his name to rhyme with hamburger and the wife, being in New Orleans gives it the French twist, neither one able to agree on how their name should be pronounced.

6228

6228

## Plate - The Gardens of Helron

Friday, August 7th, 1953.  
The following is a list of the names of the gardens of Helron, as given by the Helron family, in a letter to the Helron family, dated August 7th, 1953.

### Memorandum:

How nice to find your Tuesday letter in today's post. As you have already concluded, I have been guided by your advice regarding the Royal. It is so kind of you to set me straight on this matter so I may be guided, and especially in making out envelopes. The old Underwood is just about ready to collapse completely, and so I shall set it aside as a spare. With characteristic thoughtfulness you have inquired about ribbons for the Royal. I have a couple extra ones on hand and will let you know if I get pressed. I am under the impression they may carry ribbons for this type of machine at the store. I shall inquire and let you know later. In the meantime, I am well fortified, but I thank you sincerely for your thoughtfulness in this matter. It goes without saying that I am delighted everything went off so beautifully on Saturday. I am especially glad you mentioned the gowns worn by the Mother and God Mother, for that touch gave me an opportunity to let my imagination fill in the scene so much more fully. And isn't it good that the father of the bride, after the initial uncertainty, came through alright. And what the groom had to say to the parents was certainly gracious on his part. Let's hope everything will be clear sailing straight ahead. In today's post came the enclosure from Mrs. Holoman. I suppose it was late April or early May when last I saw her. She asked at that time if she might take with her several letters concerning B. L. C. and we agreed to do some work on an article the following week end. This letter is the first peep I have heard out of her. Before acknowledgment of her letter is made, I shall telephone Ruth Pierson of Hatchitoches, President of the Garden Club, there, and explore with the Chamber of Commerce to see if there is any point in doing anything about entertaining 500 ladies in town on February 24th or 25th.



6229

So far as my own intentions are concerned, I'm not dreaming of entertaining 500 pilgrims at a single sitting. One hundred twenty five is more than ample for a single go-round but perhaps a series of tours can be arranged that will cover most of the biddies.

The February date has one potential element in its favor, for the Chinese magnolias should be at their best along a bout then, and many of the bulb flowers might be doing business about then. But Jack Frost is an unpredictable fellow and as in counting one's chickens, so one, if smart, doesn't run up magnolias on the adding machine until they have actually come through.

But the ladies in Natchez in the early 1930's, following the big February freeze just before the Mississippi Garden Club assembled in that city, discovered that old plantation houses provided a pretty good substitute for diverting visitors when all floral evidences had been eliminated. And with this in mind, the officers in charge of the February meeting in Alexandria will be smart if they provide some substitute means of entertainment for their guests. But such considerations are for the Alexandria people to worry about. As for myself, I shall see what can be done conveniently to lend them a hand and shall write Mrs. Holloman accordingly a week hence when she has returned from Kentucky.

I suppose the mention of the Garden Club set my mind to turning over the possibility of doing a plate entitled "The Gardens of Melrose". Using the aerial photograph of the gardens as a base, I envision the houses sketched in at their relatively actual locations, with the big oak to indicate the front garden, an iris for the Iris Garden, a flock of bananas for the front of Yucca, the sun dial and bamboo for the White Garden, some narcissus for the Bulb Garden and so on. I think it has possibilities at some future time when the Melrose Plantation plate begins to play out. Guernsey lilies, of course, would define the garden of the African House, Yupper for Dr. Miller's long cabin, Crepe myrtles for little Miss Albert's studio with sweet olives for the bindery and wisteria or Chinese magnolias for the weaving house. I might keep this as a possibility, following an Uncle Tom's cabin plate, should I decide on the latter and can make Uncle Tom carry the next item. It is something which doesn't have to be rushed into, and can simmer along for a while to see if the idea really jells eventually.

I find myself counting the weeks before Labor Day when schools will be re-opening once more. I suppose we are bound to have a visitation from up the road before then, but one thing is certain, the vacation can't last more than another month.....

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Sunday, August 9th, 1953.

Memorandum:

A little after first dark tonight, every lamp post in the gardens was alight when I returned from dining at the Rand camp. Two beams from flashlights traveled along the bamboo hedge along the fence separating the iris garden from next door, and on approaching their points of origin, I found Celeste and Madam Regard, of all people, staggering around in the bushes and palms, -- searching for me. J. H. had gone to Texas for the week end and we had dined early this noon. The ladies said they were going in town to the movies, and wouldn't be back before first dark. And so when Blythe and King Rand dropped in around 5, I accepted their invitation, and succeeded unwittingly in subsequently throwing the two ladies into a panic. I expect it was my fault, since anybody would know if they ever found them at home, something must be radically wrong, and if I shouldn't ever be found slap on the home plate, something equally unimaginable must have transpired. That's how custom establishes a pattern of thinking, -- and so can lead one into false conclusions.

Saturday is said to have been the hottest day thus far this year, and I am ready to believe it. The Menksblew in at 6 a.m., but fortunately didn't get beyond the store, and they departed for Shreveport later in the day without coming in the front gate, or prizes.

Some acquaintances of Helen's arrived unannounced from Waco about noon, -- camera conscious, and so I turned them loose and saw them no more, for it was obvious it was pictures they wanted and they could operate their cameras without any assistance from me. There were other pilgrims in the afternoon, but I gave them scant attention, contenting myself to keeping in the shade and so not minding the heat which was intense.

Today's sky was equally cloudless but a vagrant breeze blew lazily from the direction of the Gulf and so tempered the sun. Thursday, Celeste had told me that Dr. Rand was in the hospital, and so I did not advise him of the baptism scheduled for St. Mathew's this morning. I was therefore astonished when Bands appeared on my gallery. Dr. Rand wanted to



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try developping roots on the limb of a white Chinese magnolia, which is said can be accomplished by removing a ring of bark and cover the ring with Spanish moss which is dampened and tied securely around the place where the bark has been taken off. I figured if he was feeling sufficiently energetic to undertake such a job, his health couldn't be too bad.

It seems they are entertaining all day Wednesday at the camp and probably some of their guests will be wanting to pass this way, as some of them are old friends of mine. I am glad to know about this in advance, as I shall be able to shape several lines of endeavor for that day in advance, and especially so as the ladies across the fence are staging a party for the same day.

And so, after much collecting of seed pods from the Chinese magnolias, grafting or whatever Dr. Rand calls his line of endeavor, and after Blythe, a little out of order, I thought, had picked quite a few of my fine gourds which, according to my way of thinking, aren't ripe as yet, so we journeyed over to the camp where we supped under your cedar, the smooth surface of the river making a wonderfully placid mirror on which was etched such pretty reflections of the dark trees along the opposite bank. A gentle breeze stirred the air and a couple of cardinals busied themselves calling the one to the other in the willows and along the margin of the river. It was all very peaceful and much as you would have liked.

Although inclined toward being sleepy last night, I did get some reading done although the subject matter wasn't particularly thrilling. I explored a page or two from the "Journey into Wonder", and was entertained by particulars about that highly speculative Pacific island, called Easter. And then there was something about various plants, including the sweet potatoe of whose origin little seems to be known, although even though its ancestry is unknown, some of its kinfolk are named, such as the tie vine, and, of all things, the Morning Glory. I had never thought of the sweet potato and the morning glory as being of the same kettle of fish, but so it seems to be. I found it interesting that while the sweet potato appears to have been a native of Central or South America, somehow it did find its way to the islands of the South Pacific long before any white men ever cross the ocean, either the Atlantic or Pacific, and this fact, plus other evidences would seem to indicate that journeys to and from America and the islands of the Pacific took place long before that gentleman named Col. Columbus, was born.

I think the Rands were hoping to contact Puny and Zelma with a view to making preparations for Wednesday's foal at the camp, but the Punys weren't at home to expect they had gone to the baptisin' and so continued their day in the big road, for my grapevine reported that Little King had arrived home from his three years of service in the Army and probably the family round it an excellent time for a sab of holiday. But

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Monday, August 10th, 1953.

Memorandum: Last night was such a delicious one to sleep, what with the thermometer dropping from somewhere around 100 to a cool 68 before morning. It is such a novel and pleasant sensation at this season of the summer to feel the impulse to grab, while still half asleep, for a sheet.

It has been cloudless again today and the temperature in the 90's, but we are promised a low of 64 before morning, and so we all should be waken full of vim and vigor on the morrow.

There were two requests today that were unexpected, one being from somebody in Baton Rouge, asking if it were possible to obtain a modest, colorful painting of a flower or some such from the brush of Clemence for around five dollars. It appears Look magazine gets around.

And the second request was from the Education Department, asking me to appear on a program being held by negro educators later in the season, with the subject of my address to be anything I cared to select. It will be a great pleasure to do what I can. I am so slightly acquainted with people in the educational field that I have no idea to whom I might be indebted for having issued this invitation.

I did read a page or two last night, after Miss Roundtree got through with Senator Duff. I found myself wading around in the pampas and the Andes with von Hombolt and with the botanist who made the South American trip with von Hombolt on his first go-round. By some oddity of manufacturing, the disk does a blur at each mention of the botanist's name, and as I know nothing about the gentleman, I remain quite ignorant as to his identity. The author remarks that after Bonaparte, von Hombolt was the most honored man in Europe during his time. Somehow I had thought of Goethe as being the man, but perhaps he never enjoyed the popular acclaim that was von Hombolt's.

I seem to have a stack of books awaiting my attention, not one of which excites my interest. I suppose this is because I have my mind set on reading Freeman's volume of George Washington, which, for some reason, seems slow about coming to hand, and until I have satisfied myself with it, I shall probably consider everything else as of secondary interest.



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A commentary on contemporary civilization in Mississippi came to hand tonight when Little King dropped in to say Howdy. I asked him if he had had any adventures on his trip down from Maryland, driving alone in his somewhat elegant car. He said he hadn't but that he had breathed much easier when he reached the bridge at Vicksburg and could see Louisiana on the far shore of the river. It seems that in approaching Meridian, Miss., a couple spark plugs became a bit of a problem, - nothing unique and something anybody could straighten out or tighten up in five minutes. He stopped at a garage, - and apparently that section is dotted with hill billy garage operators, and was told the staff of that garage couldn't work on the car, - too busy. The same answer came from the next, the next and the next. It occurred to him that perhaps nobody wanted to work on a negro's car and so, when being turned down about a dozen times, he stopped at the next, explained his spark plug problem and asked if he might for a fee, make use of a couple of the garage wrenches to put his engine back in order. He was told no garage operation on a basis the permitted drive in service on the part of the car owner. And so, creeping along, he had to journey on westward 100 miles, never sure the car would make the next turn of the road and feeling mighty depressed about the situation his problem had revealed. I must pass this account along to Doris who certainly will wax eloquent. Little King said he had hoped to discover at least one garage in the Meridian Jackson region operated by colored people but apparently the hill billys don't allow garages to be operated by people of color. Why there isn't more racial difficulties in Mississippi is a mystery to me. And the marvel of Little King's reaction seemed to be that no hatred was engendered in his mind but merely the recognition of the fact that some people are mighty disagreeable and as in the case of variations of pigmentations in the human epidermis, it's just one of those facts of life to be taken as a matter of course, - and to be vastly relieved when one moves beyond its influence.

New Orleans telephoned between this paragraph and the above. A youthful man and woman who passed here one day last week had stopped off at Weeks Hall's and had heard confirmed what they had suspected, - that Shadows on the Teche and Melrose are the two places in Louisiana that, as monuments to plantation life, really matter. They telephoned to ask if they might come back to Melrose on Thursday with cameras, tape recording machines and the Lord knows what all. I told them they might. I suppose the conversation lasted half an hour, which ought to save a heap of talk when they make it to Melrose. So the week begins and so I get on to the mail and Tender Leaf....

Seeleau's  
(Patty + Bob)

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Tuesday, August 11th, 1953.

Memorandum: How nice to find your letter of Thursday, the 6th, in today's post. I am so delighted to know how things are turning and I agree with you whole heartedly that the fact that a note was forth-coming from one of the bridal party was so much in order and in line with a sympathetic soul while the absence of a communication for the other somehow demonstrates a certain self-centeredism that seems regrettable, and most particularly perhaps because, unwittingly, the person who forgets to remember so often ends up by finding himself forgotten.

My day has been exceedingly long. The weather turned hot again, - in the upper 90's, I suppose, and the pilgrims were all unfortunate in their arrivals. The first arrived around 8. The second group, scheduled for 10, reached her at 11:05, meaning, of course, that the 11:30 dinner hour, so far as I was concerned, had to be pushed back until 12, and just as I started on my soup, people who had asked for an appointment on Friday of last week, arrived. The afternoon pattern was precisely the same and had I only been able to find a second in between for a gulp of Tender Leaf, I suppose I might have taken the dizzy schedule with more grace.

I was so glad you heard the Mansfield Invitation to Learning discussion. I am hoping your intention to hear the Gertrude Stein matter on Sunday was realized. I found it enlightening and that I wanted to read the book under discussion, "Three Lives", I believe was the title. I have never read it but as the three gentlemen went into the matter, I discovered they were accomplishing one of the true aims of real educators, - to whet the appetite of the pupil for more knowledge about the subject touched on.

I wonder if you, as I, find yourself wondering sometimes, on listening to these programs, as to why the respective educational systems under which we struggled as children never seemed to bother about creating any particular interest on the part of the pupils for the stuff they had to read. If any class in literature I attended had embraced any element in it that approached these invitation to Learning programs, I reckon I would have relished ten times more the things I discovered I liked and probably would have found much more palatable those titles which could never be forced down my neck with any vast satisfaction, at least to myself.



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Wednesday, August 12th, 1953.

I saw J. H. at supper. He had just returned from his week end in Texas. No one probably knows the purpose of his trip, for it might embrace anything from a frolic to investigation of lands for speculation, --and might quite possibly embrace both of those possibilities and half a dozen other things. He says West Texas really presents a disheartening appearance, for the effects of the drought are still evident and in many areas the prolonged dry spell still obtains. Aside from the vast losses in cattle, the cotton crop scarcely exists in some quarters. Texas, of course, is usually one of the top states in the production of cotton but in spite of the loss of this year's crop, the nation's total production for this year is estimated at about the same number of bales as last year. I believe California is steadily increasing its cotton production with each succeeding year.

Along about sun down, J. H. sent me a quarter of a chilled water melon. It was the type that has the yellow interior as opposed to the usual red coloring to which we are generally accustomed. It was a fine one as to taste, although the pulp seemed a little coarser than some of the red ones I have sampled this year.

Just as I had carved the huge slab up to share with a couple of my friends, a servant appeared announcing more pilgrims -- a groupe of three, father, mother and daughter, all Baldwins of Atlanta, and Mr. Baldwin having something to do with the Department of Agriculture. I thought a call at such an hour something of a nerve but I had to confess to myself that it wasn't any more out of the time schedule than about all the other batches I had had to contend with today. But when they were finally gone I was glad to call it a day so far as tours were concerned.

I was glad to hear Frank Edwards' program tonight, including his guest, Senator Morse, for I hadn't heard any news in two or three days, what with this or that getting in between me and the radio at news time and because it is always stimulating to hear what Senator Morse has to say. Somehow the current events seemed to trail wonderfully far away during this two or three day skip since my reading of Journey Into Wonder had taken me to the Galapagos Islands which seem to be inhabited by creatures of ancestry even more remote than my acquaintance with what's going on in the world. I shall have a busy day tomorrow, I reckon, and yet before folding my beard, I am happy to say my faithful ic bucket and Tender Leaf will give me infinite pleasure.

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Wednesday, August 12th, 1953.

Memorandum:

Another busy, hot day but withal pleasant.

But before going into that, I should like to touch on the matter of the books you mentioned in your letter of yesterday. I am so glad you told me of the one you are reading and how you got the impression that its modern flavor suggested it was more contemporary fiction or perhaps contemporary approach to historical facts than a revelation of one's self, autobiographically, as coming directly from the pen of the person who supposedly wrote it.

I believe the volume is being recorded and I have asked New Orleans to forward a copy to me as soon as it is available, and I shall enjoy it doubly, knowing that you have read it, too.

One thing I must say for this and perhaps one or two other volumes on the same period, --that it seems to have quickened interest in that era in all the readers with whom I have talked, both numb-skull and erudite. And some of the latter are probably picking up threads spun by other workers on the same period, so that a wider understanding of those times and people will be broadened. I attribute all of this impulse to the one book, although a flock of others, most of which, I assume, are trashy enough, have filled in chinks for the casual readers who have been stimulated to tread this path further.

Last night I tried reading something about the Emperor is it Emperor penguins who seem to be a fascinating little folk if one isn't too drowsy to comprehend their merits, but my head soon started nodding and I know just about as much as I did about them before I began reading. With characteristic gusto, just before the cotton season opens, half a dozen gardeners were sent me this morning on the theory that from next week until December there will be such vast activity in the cotton and pecan departments that the gardens must gird up their loins now against desertion during the next four months. It's an odd way to garden, but one does the best one can with the materials at hand.



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Blythe and the Pringles from Lecompte, La., arrived at 9, but I was ready for them, having anticipated big day by turning my house up-side down, in-side out, wrong side around, other end to, provided employment for the windfall of gardeners and furnished Celeste with oceans of zinnias and forests of butterfly lilies for her afternoon party.

The Pringles got several shots in color between 9 and 11 when I had to leave them to attend to pilgrims. I nibbled lightly at the local board and noon and at one o'clock joined the Rands for a delicious dinner. It was hot crossing the cotton fields but a lovely breeze stirred along the river and set the cedars a-swaying gently.

Dr. Rand brought me home after I had had a conference with one of the Pringles reading a pictorial thing she is trying to do. On reaching Yucca I responded to a telephone call from Millsbaugh's, asking for six dozen plates and promising me a check before the invoice arrives from Rock Hall covering the impending Joyous Coast. If that works out as promised, the thing ought to balance very neatly.

Dr. Rand came later just as my secretaries were arriving, and he waited until the ladies came to take afternoon pictures in color of this and that explosion of color which morning shadows had prevented. They had been over at Joe Rocque's whom they found very feeble but still of active mind.

I can't recall if I mentioned on Sunday that when I asked Blythe if Maud Pattison was summering in Alexandria of Henderson, North Carolina Blythe said she hadn't the faintest idea as she hadn't seen her in months. That partnership must have "busted up", I take it. I suppose Maud has remained as tiresome as ever and Blythe seems much more mellow these days and two such different qualities have probably snapped the cord which has always been something of a puzzle to me.

More secretaries came but the supper bell beat us to the post and pilgrims of color awaited a tour afterwards, so by the time first dark arrived, I was ready to call it a day and tonight, for the first time in ever so long, I shall be missing my Tender Leaf which I never got around to brew. I suppose tomorrow pattern will be as busy as today's, what with the recordings to be done and people on my hands all day. My Friday schedule is already fairly full, but if we can only escaped the Wents this week end, I think I shall get caught up easily enough, I hope. What a dull letter this has turned out to be. Let us hope for a better start at

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Re: The Shadows.

Thursday, August 13th, 1953.

Memorandum: The enclosures are the worth while items in this envelope. I think you will find Dora's letter so gay, especially as regards Texas, and Little Miss Robina's account of the encounter with the Briarwood gals is informative. Of course I think she was quite wrong in breaking the bonds of silence which I had imposed on her regarding the plate business but I can well imagine the temptation was pressing under the circumstances she outlined and while I can forgive her for breaking the confidence, I cannot but regret that she gave way to the impulse.

Oddly enough, about the time the ladies Robina and Caroline were into each other's hair, I was penning Caroline a casual letter which she probably found awaiting her on her return to Briarwood. In view of the talk that went on at the Shreveport encounter, the presence of a letter from me will probably impell her to take pen in hand immediately, although there is no more reason for her so doing that a half dozen other circumstances during the past half year during which she hasn't bothered to acknowledge any communications.

There is only one thing I hope and pray as regards myself in relation to the Briarwood set up and that is that Briarwood may never learn that I have set things in motion that will jump their income from one particular source from around five hundred dollars to something over a thousand dollars a year. I think it can be so arranged as to prevent them from ever learning that I had anything to do with fiddling with the faucets in this instance or that they could make a mistake in the matter of the gift plate, which most certainly my name appeared on the wrapper, then surely it shouldn't be difficult for them never to dream whence started the impending matter in which my interest will never appear either in the typed or spoken word.

Early this morning the New Orleans people arrived on schedule. The weather was cooperative, - a cloudless sky all day, - and boiling. They are everything that Clarence Johnston in the matter of consideration and cooperation. We made an initial tour of the gardens and buildings, checking off what shots could best be accomplished while the sun was yet in the East.



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and which scenes lent themselves best for afternoon filming.

They worked mightily and allowed me an interlude with Dr. and Mrs. Knipmeyer and after a very pleasant dinner, we all went to work again. I sent for Clemence who came through the bamboo promptly at 2 and several shots were secured of her, after which the balance of the afternoon things were caught on film. The big old sound recording apparatus was put into shape but we were so concentrated on making the most of the favorable lights and shadows that we never got around to using the recording tape. They will return later in the season for whatever additional pictures are required at which time the sound recordings will be made and since the weather is bound to be a little cooler then, I think I shall be able to do the job under more satisfactory circumstances.

During Frank Edwards' broadcast tonight, they telephoned me from town to express their thanks again for a satisfactory day and to say that after leaving here, they stopped by Clemence's house where they bought several pictures from her facile brush and they seemed very happy to have acquired these souvenirs of their jaunt into the Cane River country.

During a year or so either in the late 1930's or early 1940's they occupied an apartment from whose windows they could look out on 61 Seventh Avenue South, - a coincidence as striking, it seems to me, as the fact that Lyle and I once lived in adjoining houses in Manhattan and never knew each other during that twelfth month.

They told me that Weeks told them that he has deeded The Shadows to that organization whose precise name I have forgotten, --The Historic Buildings Society or whatever, of which President Grant's son is the head. It seems this Foundation requests or requires that as a condition of accepting such a gift, an income for the upkeep of the place is required, too, and it is their understanding that Weeks' fortune will be included in the deed of the New Iberia property. I believe Weeks' aunt left him something over a million dollars and I suppose the income from that ought to go far in keeping up the old place.

I was so delighted the New Orleans people were here for it afforded me a perfect excuse to decline an invitation to a big party Celeste gave at the camp down Monette's Ferry way. In the morning a dozen chickens were being fried, among other things, and when she had Mitchell, the Arc, and another servant or two with her. I believe the guests included Hertzogs, Watsons, Williamses, including R. B. and Ora and family, much clergy and the Lord knows whom all. But the hour advances and I must fold. Hope you enjoy the enclosures.

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Friday, August 14th, 1953.

Memorandum:

A lovely suelt new moon hangs suspended low over the Montrose hills and the weather man promises tomorrow's thermometer will again go into the hundreds while the sport broadcaster speak of rains in Manhattan, drowning out the baseball games, thanks to the first of the seasonal twisters moving up from the Indies.

But in spite of the local fair weather, my own day has been comparatively quiet. I even got a chance to turn hurriedly through this week's issue of Life, --a rare accomplishment for me, so far as accomplishing this on the day the publication arrives. And mention of this week's issue reminds me that it was a pleasure to recognize some pleasant old friends in the reproductions, --the Francois Premier, Madame Recamier and so on. When I get around to it, I shall be interested to see if the text covering this picture is anything special. So far as I am concerned, I have always felt that this particular portrait of Madame Recamier, --there were so many others, --but that this particular one somehow epitomized in a single canvas all that was best in the simplicity of the Directoire period. I suppose there are comparatively few pictures that sum up the salient features of what we like to think of as most characteristic or best in a given age, and Madame Recamier is one of these, just as Ainsborough's Duchess of Devonshire is pretty much the same thing for the 18th century while Rigaud's Quatorze unrolls the amplitude of the 17th century. Sometime I should like to see a long gallery, one side wall and the opposite wall and ceiling of glass, with the wall hung with 50 or 100 canvases in chronological succession of the various periods from, say, the Renaissance to now, --one single picture representing each period or phase and I think the effect of marching through era after era would be stunning.

But before letting myself get bogged down too much with Art, let me pause to remark that my friend, Alton Johnson, the youthful wood carver, received a check for fifty dollars as a prize for another bit of wood carving this week. He is such a fine person, it seems doubly fitting that he should be continuing his success in this undertaking.



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In the field of contemporary folk ways, I must remark upon certain effects of the present cotton dusting pursuits. It seems wonderful to me, the adaptability of insects to the death dealing insecticides, for this year the flies have developed an immunity to the stuff that last year wrought such havoc among them. And each year the formula must be changed to insure its success in dealing out death to the boll weevil and boll worm problems.

On the human side there is a point to be considered, too. For since the air planes began their rounds over the cotton fields this year, practically all human beings have been sniffing and clearing their respective throats. For several weeks all signs in the nasal passages suggest a cold, but that is an illusion, for in reality I have no cold but am merely experiencing irritations in the nose and throat brought on by the chemicals being scattered from on high. Another week or so and the dusting season will be over and it isn't going to be the boll weevil exclusively who will welcome the respite.

The report on the party at Bourbon Lake, --Ora's name for the camp down's Montette's Ferry way, --was a great success. I believe the thing got under way about 3 o'clock and Celeste told me she got home around 10, --an outing in the present heat wave which I do not sigh for. Ora told me she sat and chatted with Dr. Eleanor for a long while and although neither of them scuffled about any, they just naturally were all a-drip sitting perfectly still. There must be some recompense somewhere in all this but off hand it does seem odd for fully grown people to forsake their air-conditioned homes and offices to go and sit for hours in such a swelter.

In the field of gardening, in estimating the profit and loss columns, I have long since discovered the pilgrims and field hands, metamorphosed into gardeners, occupy telling places. While engaged with pilgrims yesterday, I set some field hands to removing tie vines and morning glory vines from the fences where they did an excellent job and having finished it with remarkable speed, they leaped over into the gourd section and destroyed half my crop quite beyond the bounds where I had put them to work. I shall still have bushels of gourds but not half so many as I had anticipated. And speaking of tie vines and morning glories, I learned but recently that both are close kin to the sweet potatoe, appearing prominently, as they do, in the sweet potatoe family tree, all of which seems as far fetched as the family relation between Spanish moss and the pineapple. But the week end begins and I must fold. May yours be a nice one

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Sunday, August 16th, 1953.

Memorandum:

Another lovely week end and withal wonderfully peaceful. Naturally I am not unmindful that one of these days we are going to be honored by a prolonged visitation from Shreveport, but sufficient unto the day is the pleasure of quiet thereof, and the hurricane season may come, as it will, when the time is appropriate.

As you may have already noticed, the Library of Congress thing goes forward to you in the same mail with this memo. I didn't have time to run through it but shall be interested to learn if it contained anything we have requested.

I shall enclose with this memo a letter from Mrs. Stirling along with some clippings she sent. I shall write her that I am keeping the clippings, --which means that you might retain them unless you care to consign them to the trash basket. Apparently the lady had a fine trip and I am glad for I think she both deserved and needed it. I shall respond to her letter later tonight and, it just occurs to me, I had also better write Mrs. Holloman, too, about her 500 biddies for February.

The impulse for parties continues to permeate the air and I have been lucky enough thus far to escape acceptance of any invite. On Saturday night the Mayor of Hatchitoches and Mrs. Keyes entertained at their camp, down the river a piece, opposite Magnolia. They were so kind as to invite me but.....and on the same evening the lady doctor and Don entertained at a barbecue at their home. J. H. and Celeste went but I declined.

This morning, just as I was in the midst of listening to the Invitation to Learning program, Dr. Rand appeared to invite me to dine at the camp today, and so all I might have learned about Stendal went glimmering. I was getting much out of the discussion and regretted having the thing broken into but as I never have been very enthusiastic about the author of Rouge et Noir and all the other things, I was not as much distressed as I would have been had the subject been Dr. Schweitzer. It turned out that unbeknown to me, E. H. had accepted a request of pilgrims for a 1 o'clock tour, and so I had to send a messenger to the Rand camp to explain my regrets.



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A movie is being shown in town, called "Titanic" or some such, and the ladies, viewing it this afternoon, reported many details about the disaster tonight. The picture brought up considerable talk about next summer's planned jaunt across the Atlantic. At the moment there are two primary points to be striven for: - a minimum of expenditure, a maximum of comfort. And if this seems paradoxical to you, so does it seem to me. Boat transportation is planned for at least one crossing. What is considered of paramount importance in sea transportation is an inexpensive ticket and a state room with private bath, the latter being imperative. If that can be accomplished it will rank as another of those rareties known as eating one's cake and having it, too. Since the comptroller of the purse stings seems utterly indifferent as to costs involved, it is difficult to imagine why the prospective traveler should give that matter any serious thought and if the word, serious, seems out of character, it must be admitted that on expenditures of any sort that is perhaps the only thing taken seriously. An interesting point about the whole hejira is the fact that there doesn't seem to be anything to be encountered on the opposite side of the Atlantic, once one has arrived, that excites any interest, save possibly a chick restaurant where there is dancing. A pretty dull book in the form of an encyclopaedia as to why people go to Europe would make pretty dull reading, I should imagine, but undoubtedly would contain a surprising collection of reasons, I suppose. I have such vague notions as to what contemporary Europe may be like, especially the frolic spots and their location, that I fear I can be of little help in making suggestions, but perhaps I would come nearer to hitting the bull's eye if I recommended Rome as a starter to satisfy religious yearnings, to be followed immediately by the Riviera. If Rome were achieved by Easter, then one might strike some place like Nice by the full tide of Spring where one would encounter more dancing, perhaps, than in any other spot on the continent. Lending a hand to people striving to attain desires that, at best, are a little nebular in one's own concepts is indeed an imposing problem.

I wondered if you were listening tonight to la Rountree when Assistant Secretary Robertson corrected her by saying "Mrs. Roundtree, my name is not Roberts but Robertson" whereupon she countered by saying that "I'm Miss, not Mrs." That was one way to add novelty to "Meet the Press".

At the moment, and I cannot believe it, I seem to have no definite appointments for the impending week. The net result, I suppose, will be a solid bang-up.....

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Monday, August 17th, 1953.

Memorandum: The enclosures are of secondary interest, and the letter you will probably dispose of promptly as it it no doubt carries extraneous data, but I send it along because of the reference to the eventual forwarding from Rock Hall of the final sketch which reached me today and which I am returning to Rock Hall forthwith. I suppose this sketch may reach you around Labor Day, possibly later, and as the merchandise on which it will appear cannot possibly come to hand before sometime in October, you will feel quite leisurely about the 42nd Street business, for I shall have no need of the print until shipment of the plates is made. In mentioning all this so casually, I pray I may not appear to accept all these good offices on your part with anything but sincerest appreciation, and I pray you, if circumstances at any time should put road blocks of any sort in the way of handling this business, do, please, say the word, and I can switch the work to Shreveport or some such. Frankly, there is a vast pleasure for me in feeling that we are sharing in these undertakings and I think the individual items will always mean a heap more to me just because of the element of you in them but please never let them be a burden.

As for the clipping, I have no doubt you have seen more extensive particulars in local papers but I send this along regardless. Of course, I don't want it back. If I remember correctly, Mr. Cain mentioned something about getting down this way this autumn and I shall be happy if he can linger for a while for I find him as entertaining a literary personality as I have ever known.

Today's weather continues warm although a cooling breeze kept the thermometer down to the upper 80's, although we are promised upper 90's for the morrow except in thunderstorm areas where the winds will reach 30 mile gusts and temporary cooling will take place. There will be temporary crashing of pecan limbs, too, if we get 30 mile winds, what with the considerable tonnage the trees are supporting.



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Monday, August 17th, 1953.

Over the week end two or three of my soldier friends, just out of the after 3 years of service, have confided to me that they plan re-enlisting. One of them, Richard Kemble, spent 18 months in Korea where he said he found it very rough but in spite of that, he is going back into the Army. Little King came for a long visit. He too, is going to re-enlist within 60 or 90 days. During that interim, Little King hopes to get a divorce from his mulatto wife, who never was any account and whom Little King married, I think, because her lighter hue appealed to him. He told me he had a girl friend in Baltimore who is much lighter than his wife, and I suppose that seals that infatuation, while the Army will provide a more steady income for the new wife, I suppose, that she is likely to find elsewhere. Little King's wife, with their three small children, have been receiving a monthly check of \$169.00 on which she can live easily enough in this area where she has no rent to pay and where she contributes nothing to the food she and the children receive at their grandfather's hands. I have heard over the radio that the Army is disappointed so few people re-enlist. I can't for the life of me imagine why anybody should want to, and after talking with local friends, I can only wonder more.

On the plantation there seems to be a considerable amount of domestic difficulty and general dissatisfaction. At the moment there are seven gentlemen, heads of families, who find themselves deserted by their wives. This seems like quite a per centage for any given period. And some of these husbands, bereft of partners, will drift to the big cities for a season, probably. At the same time there are four or five families who have gone to work in Ohio, Michigan and California, all having left during the past week. This seems particularly odd because all of them worked crops on shares, and what with their respective harvests beginning next week, it seems like a weekly worker quitting his job just before the pay envelopes are passed around. With all the mulattoes across the river having no crops to harvest this year because of the havoc wrought by the high water in May and June, the plantation will have no difficulty in getting more than ample field hands to garner the cotton and pecanes. I am wondering if there may be an element of dissatisfaction over the new overseer, Mr. Youngblood. Perhaps the thing is merely seasonal and due to

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Tues. Aug. 18  
Wednes. Aug. 19

Memorandum:  
It has been so pleasant today with a brief shower this morning around 7, cooling the air so that it never got above 87 during the day, which seem quite Arctic for August.

But the pilgrims were all dull and I am always twice as hard a worker with dull ones than the other kinds since I invariably feel that I ought to be able to cast about and come up with something that would interest everyone in something or other. But this is difficult when, apparently, some people aren't interested in anything.

The Mayor telephoned me today to inquire if it was true, as rumored, that a plate of the Bermuda section was forthcoming. It seems he is planning to effect some arrangements in his home and has in mind using the Gane River series in connection with the new decors and accordingly was anxious to know about Vol. 6, if it was to come into being.

He fell to chatting about Bermuda, naturally, and asked me if I had ever done much research on the drilling equipment which had been fashioned there in ante bellum times by one of the slaves, --perhaps Phillippe. It seems several oil expositions have borrowed a drilling screw, fabricated in iron by a Prudhomme slave, for the drilling of water wells. But the idea behind the invention is such that it became ideal for the boring for oil wells. I believe it is called a fish tail screw or some such. I must look into this matter a little further.

Anyway, I am glad I put Phillippe on the plate, for eventually perhaps a Prudhomme slave will be fully as worthy of remembrance as a Prudhomme. Surely there must have been some Prudhommies as worthy of remembrance as their slaves, but I have met few of the present generation who were very fascinating. -- Prudhommies, that is, although some of their contemporary slaves are quite interesting.

**Meticulous and unimaginative** I guess are the two words



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best describing the present generations of Purdhommes. Alphonse who lives at Oakland is said to be the finest operator of a Post Office in the Parish, --at \$1,500.00 a year, and that's about all there is to be said for him except that he is very pleasant. I recall how floored was Pat when he traveled by car from here to Corpus Christi or some such place once, for one of the Prudhomme youths devoted himself to recording the miles between each stop and the time consumed, noting carefully when the drove up to a filling station, how long they remained, the minute they took off again, the exact amount of money expended for gas and so on. The net result of such bookkeeping, of course, was almost identical, I suppose, with the tourist visiting the Louvre who devotes his attention to his Baedeker, noting by pencil check which paintings have been hanging, according to the book, through which he has been passing, he, himself, never seeing more than what the printed page says is there.

As between this paragraph and the above, Mrs. Coombs telephoned. She wanted to report that she had made a purely social call at Briarwood today, meeting Caroline for the first time. She found her bubbling over with vim and vigor and falling on Mrs. Coombs' neck because the latter is doing some research for some Washington law firm relative to starting legal proceedings in behalf of the Kado Indians who were cheated out of a million acres of land 150 or perhaps 125 years ago. As Indians have always been Caroline's first love, this circumstance endeared Mrs. Coombs to her and off they were at a great rate. Mrs. Coombs expressed regret that she had not met Virginia as yet, to which Caroline replied that she probably never would because Virginia sleeps all the time. Mrs. Coombs repudiated that she hoped she might see her one time, at least, since it would be imperative for her to do so, as the new Welfare worker in the Parish, if Virginia's checks are to be continued. Now Eugene O'Neil could make quite a lot out of the several ingredients mentioned above and known to us, --constant sleep, Caroline's desire not to be bothered with anything save her iris and piddling, and this one, of course is the evil suggestion, the thanking of Sister for the gift of the plate I had sent, and the giving of iris to Sister at Christmas, although Caroline loathes her, for with this element, Mr. O'Neil could recall that Miss Cammie used to be given codine for stomach ache, etc., etc., and is there some relation between Virginia's endless sleep and the curious contacts which have so puzzled Robina, among others, of late.

So are scandles begun and what a lovely thriller a Briarwood tale would make with use ingredients stirred up in a single pot....

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Gorham holding

Wednesday, August 19th, 1953.

Memorandum:

Summer continues on its torrid course with road runners cluttering up the highways and plantation hands somehow conveying the impression that although laboring at one odd job or another, they actually are concentrating on next week when everyone will be grabbing at a sack and diving into the cotton fields.

Every morning and noon truck loads of Melrose hands head out for the Gorham neighborhood, 7 or 8 miles off in the hills where J. H. or the plantation has just acquired another forest tract, this one of about 1,700 acres, which is being clean of underbrush. It's an odd sensation the negroes have in traveling into this region for they fear, and rightly so, the hill bilies in that area but since the tract where they are working belongs to Melrose, they feel reasonably secure against the resident white trash.

Along about 7 o'clock this evening, an old class mate of Joe Henry, bearing, of all names, that of Bob Hope, passed this way for his initial look at Melrose. He has been a resident of Shreveport all his life and known Joe for the past twenty years or so but never had been in this neighborhood before. He was entranced with all he had to see and perhaps the shadowy outline of things, --it is cloudy tonight, -- made a more favorable impression than might have been his at high noon. He said he would like to come back sometime but hastened to say he would not bring his wife as she wouldn't like a place such as this, for she like only those places that have been newly painted and where all the plants and bushes are placed in perfect order and carefully kept in line. Mrs. Bob Hope, take it, would hit it off wonderfully with Mrs. General.

I got around to read a little last night before folding up for the day. I chanced on "Man's Stature" or some such by Viscardi, or some such, with a preface by Bernard M. Baruch. It's a well-written autobiographical thing of a Manhattan youth, born in 1912, who is confronted by the difficulty of having practically no legs and how he meets conditions of childhood and youth and how he rises above his drawbacks.



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Wednesday, August 19th, 1953

His account of life at Fordham University took me back to the 3rd Avenue "L" which, when I first knew the neighborhood, came to its termination at a station called Botanical Gardens which actually wasn't so far from Fordham's campus, but that was before the new "L" thundered on up Webster Avenue to Woodlawn or where ever it finally ended up.

The author's work in Walter Reed hospital during the war through some interesting side lights on that phase of rehabilitation work, and, of course, I was entranced when the author remarked, on reporting his first "command to tea" at the White House by Mrs. Roosevelt, that he found her the most gracious lady he had ever known.

And mention of the word, Roosevelt, reminds me that tonight Washington announces that the Eisenhower Administration will turn public power over to private utilities and that if any projects, such as impounding of water by dam building is too expensive for private enterprise, the Government will construct such works and turn over the power thus generated to private utilities. That seems to be nice work if you can get it, --the taxpayer's money used to build power that will be handed over to private corporations to make the profits. Such a policy should surprise nobody, of course, since last November's vote was for or against giving the purse strings over to the financial big shots but the killing part of it is that probably comparatively few of the voters will ever sense the fact that they have endorsed a wholesale give away to the big boys at the expense of themselves...

Somehow I have lost track of last year's Democratic standard bearer. The last I heard of him, he was in Europe but was planning to return to the United States late in July, and rumor had it he was going to marry an English lassie. Off hand, I should say I hear daily news reports but it is possible my head begins nodding before the news casters get on to anything that is really interesting. And for me, Mr. Stevenson is always interesting.

I ran out of lemons on Saturday but got a new supply today and so the Tender Leaf is going to flow abundantly tonight, and instead of reading, I am going to indulge in a musical for I seem to be in a mood that only a dab of Mozart and Chopin could satisfy.....

Childhood and youth and how he rises above his drawbacks.

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Thursday, August 20th, 1953.

# Memorandum:

How nice to find your week end letter in today's post and to catch a glimpse of what is stirring on and about.

I am delighted that you have been able to make out the scratchings of the Royal and I trust this ribbon isn't getting too faint to track along as it should. I shall put on a new one shortly or if and when...

And thanks no end for giving me another vignette of how things turn in the domestic set up of the newly weds. The two year lease is amazing to start with. I hadn't known before that anything more than one year terms covered the apartments in the more modest brackets. I found myself almost shuddering when viewing your picture of the surroundings in which the young people find themselves. The absence of any view save roof tops and cement sidings suggests the end of the world. If it be true, as the adage has it that Love is blind, let us hope the love they have for each other will be sufficiently intense during the next couple of years that they will never be impressed by the sight of anything beyond their window pane. Perhaps both of them, being long time residents of the city, don't realize what they are missing in such surroundings and perhaps the absence of a leaf or a blade of grass from their residence doesn't pall on them the way it would those of us who incline to agree with the New England poet speaking about the soul that "groping blindly above it for light, climbs to a soul in grass and in flowers".

I am glad you were interested in the reference to "The World of Eli Whitney" by Hevins. I think you will enjoy turning through it eventually. I learned so much from the first reading that I intend turning through it again before long.

Today's incoming mail was fairly heavy although I shall enclose but a letter or so, wishing to keep this or that one for an address or some such, and wanting to send one from the Segeaus of New Orleans to Dora, feeling

and I loved it and was glad the day was done, I hope.....



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their enthusiasm for her handiwork with the brush will please him mightily. I shall ask him to return it and will then send it along.

I think you will vastly enjoy the letter from the Bluff Plantation. She writes to well, it is a pity she doesn't put hand to paper more frequently. The two points that will strike you with especial force are the reference to the Briarwood set up, and secondly the story in which the American Ambassador to Italy figures. I think you will agree with me that is the most hilarious one yet, and withal so pat in carrying out the contention that converted religionists are inclined to be much more fanatical than those born to the particular brand of Faith.

But there's a post script to the Luce tale which struck me as being almost as funny as the story itself. I thought it so amusing that I related it to J. H. and the clerk at supper. To my surprise, J. H., in all seriousness, replied: "But, F., you don't think, do you, that anything like that could ever have happened."

J. H. has such a keen business mind.

A secretary arrived around 3 o'clock today, and with him, a young man, describing himself as James Brown of Columbus, Ohio, who chanced to be coming in the front gate at the same time the secretary headed in. As Mr. Brown was equipped with much camera, I suggested he get a few shots at the African House while the secretary was giving me a couple of addresses. Two minutes later I looked for Mr. Brown but couldn't locate him. Touring the gardens, I continued calling: "Mr. Brown, Mr. Brown". In a few minutes one of the gardeners came a-jumpin'. It was Murphy, a brother of Sam Brown. He seemed as amazed that I should be calling to him as "Mr. Brown" as I was to see him respond, for I had never thought about Murphy having the same name. He pointed out in which direction he'd seen the Clumbus gentleman go, and I continued calling: "Mr. Brown, Mr. Brown". Then McKinley came a jumping, and McKinley is Murphy's brother, and there was the same surprise to be gone through with. And the up-shot of the whole thing was that I never did find Mr. Brown. But three pilgrims from South Louisiana blew in at 5:30, and dove-tailed those coming by appointment at 6, and I got my supper at 8, supper with Cabellero's Straus, and I loved it all and was glad the day was done, I hope....

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Friday, August 21st, 1953.

Memorandum: A lovely sunny day, and the hour was 3 and Helen and Junior Fugabou were engaged in secretarial work when from where I sat and listened, I could see and hear Helen and beyond the great pot, three grown people and a boy, perhaps 8 or 10 years of age. They were approaching Yucca. I waited until Helen had come to the end of a paragraph and then I answered their knock. In this day of rural free delivery, telegraphs, telephones and Hydrogen bombs, among the most undreamed of people to expect, --without the warning of any of the afore-said, would be Mrs. Moore, her daughter, son-in-law and grandson.

Never much of surprised to begin with, I bounced them on to the gallery giving on the White Gallery and went back to finish the letter on which I was engaged. Then I got out the wine bottle and joined the unexpected guests.

Mrs. Moore looked wonderful, talked with amazing speed and was impressed by everything she saw, which wasn't much, there were so many things she had to tell me, and learned nothing from me, as I didn't have to get a word in edge ways.

The only things I remember she had to tell me was regarding a portrait of Sir William Dunbar which the ladies of the D. A. R. have hung in their fine Hatcher shrine of Rosalie. Mrs. Moore thought this a rare bit of irony or dubious in taste, since, as she explained, Sir William remained a loyal subject of King George during the American Revolution. I suggested she and I might pool our pennies and get some artist to execute a portrait of George 3rd which we could present to the Rosalie chapter of the D. A. R. Frankly I know nothing about Sir William's position or loyalties during the Revolution, but as he carried



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on a brisk correspondence with Thomas Jefferson during the latter's administration, I think he must have been a convert, at least, to the cause of America eventually.

From piece meal information, I learn a few undigested facts about a car wreck that hurt nobody much sometime during the afternoon. The Melrose plantation force was back of Gorham clearing woods and J. H. drove over there in Little King's car, with Little King, his wife, and Pearly Mae, a former cook at Melrose being along, and how all this was so, I don't understand, but I suppose J. H. may have caught a ride returning from that operation yonder. Be that as it may, the car was struck by something or other, the two gentlemen not being hurt, it is said, but the ladies banged up a little, a cut on the arm of one, a gashed eye lid on the other. I have always marveled that J. H. has survived the hazards of the road in which he seems to have had endless close shaves. I have about come to the conclusion that it is because he is always driving at 90 miles an hour and anything he strikes just naturally gives way and he goes through without a scratch.

Interruption:  
I never much of surprised to begin with, I thought I had seen a brother of the Dark Duke, on his way to the honkey-tonk, penetrated the White Garden and dropped in to see me to tell me about the accident. About 20 miles from here and beyond Gorham where the plantation people were clearing woodland, Little King was scooting along, headed for Camp Polk at Leesville. On making the crest of a hill, he suddenly discovered his road blocked by a car at right angles to the highway, the car having pulled out from a side road to turn around. A crash was inevitable and it folded Little King's car up. When he had extricated himself and taken a quick look at the two ladies with him, he went over to the car he had struck, which was less damaged, and was floored to hear a familiar voice from within say:  
"For Heaven's sake, is that you, boy!" and of course the speaker was none other than J. H. I find it odd that in view of all the Leesville traffic, two cars thus from Melrose should have succeeded in wrecking each other. It seems J. H. said the accident was entirely his fault, telephoned Melrose to have drivers with trucks go and take both cars in, bringing him Celeste's car, as he had an appointment within 20 minutes in--of all places, -- Alexandria. In starting out, J. H. ran into the ditch and folded up a fender and smashed off a wheel disk on Celeste's car. I hope he made it to his appointment without any other adventures.

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Sunday, August 23rd, 1953.

#### Memorandum:

It was a so-so week end, the skies cloudy and offering no encouragement to the cotton bolls to open so that the harvest will be put off at least another week.

About 9 o'clock on Saturday morning, Sister appeared on my gallery. She had brought both boys to spend the balance of their vacation here.

I saw J. H. at supper for the first time since Friday's accident. He looked alright and declared he was, but when he arose, I noticed he did so with difficulty and he obviously is in pain as he ambles with vast slowness from whatever limited spot to spot requires his presence. Anybody else would be flattened out in the bed but he will always be one of the world's worst patients since he disdains admitting he isn't feeling in the pink.

Dr. Rand and Horace White came to see me at 11:20 today, inviting me to dine at the camp. I was scheduled to dine at 11:30 across the fence and told them so but promised to make a round at the camp between then and 5 o'clock when they were heading home.

At dinner I learned a flock of nuns had asked if they might stop off to see Melrose on their way from Hatchitookes to a frolic at Father Lyon's Church in Cloutierville, saying they would arrive "sometime after 2:15". I accordingly delayed my visit to the camp until the reverend sisters had come and gone. True to their word, they did get here "something after 2:15", for it was precisely a quarter of 5 when they blew in, and nobody except General Patten ever did a Melrose tour in 15 minutes. But everyone was very nice and even though I regretted standing up the Rands a second Sunday in a row, I was glad to give the girls a pleasant go-round.

Most of them, by some miracle, knew a little about the place and were familiar with ante bellum personalities, and that always adds interest.

One of the sisters got me aside to talk over history a little. She was delightful and had sense, too. In speaking of



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the various people in the literary world who had passed this way, she asked me if Frances Parkinson Keyes had ever made the front gate. I told her she had not. She said that for the peace of mind of everyone at Melrose, she was glad we had escaped her. She said that by some special dispensation, Madam Keyes had obtained permission to be a guest in a convent for a while, --I believe in South Louisiana, -- where the nun who was speaking had been stationed. She said the convent had never had such a trying guest who demanded everything and was satisfied with nothing that was done to make her stay pleasant. After the first day, she demanded that the convent install a telephone in her room for her exclusive use. The convent didn't even have a telephone of its own but that made no difference to la Keyes who kept up a racket about her demands being satisfied.

One of the sisters, at the direction of the Mother Superior, prepared coffee and served it to la Keyes in her room, but la Keyes denounced the girl and sent her spinning, swishing skirts and tottering coffee tray, from her apartment. No, la Keyes is one guest for whom everyone may praise Heaven if they can escape dispensing hospitality to her.

It is pleasant to be able to report that volume V. of Freeman's Washington came to hand and that I kept awake long enough on Saturday night to read a few pages. It starts off with 1778 and 1779 and is an endless recitation of the problems and perplexities that be-set Washington so eddlessly and to such a pitch that one can but marvel the man didn't throw up the sponge and let the whole business go to pot, as most certainly it would have done, had he not been a person of the unusual stature he was.

Frankly, I am not interested in the minute details of the military operations, but that is what this phase of his career has to do with and so I waded through them for the morsels of other knowledge that this wonderful job of research has set forth. It is interesting, for example, to learn that Washington stated with some vehemence that if he could be done with all foreign officers with the exception of Lafayette, he would be freed of a most oppressive burden. It seems that their unending squabbling and pushing for honors and power tried the Commander to the point of distraction when everything else was in a tizzy. I must have been nodding at one place when I read that Washington selected some residence in New Jersey for headquarters temporarily, and that it belonged to the widow, Mrs. Theodosia somebody who, Freeman remarks, later became Mrs. Aaron Burr. I realized on awakening that never before had I given any thought to the identity of Theodosia's mama, but I am under the impression the first Mrs. Burr died early. Heaven knows the second one didn't, -- la June!.....

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Monday, August 24th, 1953.

Memorandum:

The weather remains cloudy and the cotton bolls remain tight shut, awaiting a few days of constant sunshine to pop them open. Here and there some hardy soul, sack on shoulder, pursues the occasional gleam of white in the sea of green and all in all, I think the plantation, by hop, skip and jump procedure has rounded up a bale.

The majority of the field hands, however, continue cleaning out underbrush in the remote Gorham section and I am always delighted when this one or that takes time out to come to tell me, following the day's labor, as to what plant or shrub they have discovered that might be of interest to me. Dee-dee, father-in-law of the Dark Duke, came by tonight, saying he had found a fine young palm tree and had dug it up and brought it to me, thinking I might like to have it. I expressed enchantment, naturally, and of course didn't tell him that it is the palmetto and not that palm that grows in the hills. I planted it in a line with a half dozen big palms and it will probably never grow another inch, since the palmetto doesn't thrive in the rich bottom lands. But Dee-dee will be pleased that his gift has been set out and I shall continue to receive reports from different workers as to what botanical treasures they uncover. Occasionally one discovers a gardenia bush, usually of such proportions that it cannot be moved. The presence of such a plant is tell-tale evidence, of course, of a house and garden that once flourished in what is now an area that has but definitely returned once more to the primeval forest.

I wonder if you got an opportunity to "Meet the Press" on Sunday night when Ambassador Lodge played the part of the Christian in the arena. I was vastly disappointed that the man who somehow impressed me as not being nearly the liberal I had supposed him to be, perhaps it was just an off night for the former Senator, -- I hope. There was something about all his answers, however, that struck me as being definitely stemming from a rather narrow, pseudo-isolationist viewpoint. A case in point, it seems to me, is his



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opposition to India having a place at the Korean gathering. He may be quite right in regretting the presence of India, but his noisy expression of opposition strikes me as being most unwise in the effects it may have to the American disadvantage in Arab-Asian circles. It seems to me if would have been so much wiser to have said that the U. S. is all in favor of India on the assumption, of course, that Cuba, too, may have a seat along side. Cuba or some such could be used to short circuit India's vote and at the same time there would be no resentment from the Asian block, stirred up by the anti-India place on the peace table board.

I got around to do a bit of reading last night, too, and as a result of what I read, I realized I had forgotten whole blocks of American history which I should have remembered. The account of how Washington himself stumbled over the Benedict Arnold mess at West Point came to me as a mild surprise since I had forgotten the details and somehow by some twist cannot explain, I had got around to painting a mental picture of Mr. Arnold turning over West Point to the British, which, of course, never happened, although the Lord knows Mr. Arnold rigged things wonderfully to that end, even thought the chance visit of Washington put a crimp in the business. Arnold was madly in love with his wife who, with their baby, was unable to make the precipitous flight from West Point when Mr. Arnold slid out from the breakfast table and thence by horseback down the river to a British boat. But Washington treated the lady with the greatest courtesy, passing along an unopened letter to her from her husband, and arranging for the lady's safe conduct, under care of one of Washington's own officers, to her home in Philadelphia. It was all very 18th century in its nobility and until their deaths, Lafayette, Hamilton and others, present in the Arnold house on the day of the plot's exposure, believed that Mrs. Arnold never had the slightest inkling of her husband's rascality. But Freeman adds that from 1950 research by one of the Van Doren's, --Mark or Carl, it now appears Mrs. Arnold was quite conversant with all the chicanery but played her role of distraught wife so convincingly that she hoodwinked all the gentlemen in the Washington suite. Within a few months, Arnold, the former American general, was leading British troops that were sent to pillage and plunder the countryside along the James River in Virginia. One wonders if he would have performed thus if Washington had not turned over his wife and child so promptly at West Point but had kept them within American lines until the war was finished.

I think the enclosure is of no interest, but I send it along to keep you abreast with doings on the Cooper. And now for a round of Tender Leaf and another shot at West Point.....

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Thurs.  
Wednesday, August 25th, 1953.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Wednesday-Thursday letter in today's post, along with the clippings which I have enjoyed to the fullest. I shall return them later.

But before saying anything, let me express my sincere regards for your own good self in the hurly-burly which must be your lot, as between now and early September. Perhaps it is just as well that I am having a touch of distraction from the Shreveport area, at the same time, for if we must experience such dislocations of schedule, it is nice to think that when a measure of normalcy returns, its blessings may settle over both camps at the same time.

It goes without saying that I rejoice to learn that restoration work is going on at Versailles for it invariably pleases the heart to know that such a place is getting a new lease on life, promising endless pleasure for those of our time and those who will come after us, and even though the number of people it inspires may always be small, the uplift that it will give civilized souls the world over is beyond measure so that life will mean something more to many of them because of the efforts to preserve the place are currently being expended.

I appreciate so much the words of wisdom you found time to pass along to me regarding the impact of "drummed in" learning on the heads of students in a method and at a time that lends little by way of enchantment. It is better it was pounded into us, I suppose, even though a much better job of salesmanship might be done all across the world in the realm of pedagogy. And in spite of the poor start we were inclined to make under such inept service of such delectable fare, we at least got a glimpse at some of the items on the menu which, in much later sittings, we were able to sample at our leisure and really enjoy. There is something about it that is somehow akin to the feeling that while none of us were given an opportunity to select our relatives, God, by special dispensation, gave us all a second chance by permitting us to select our friends.

I'm so glad you enjoyed taking a peep at Harry Emerson Fosdick's book on Jesus and it is nice knowing we both heard the Gertrude Stein symposium. I found her "Wars I Have Known" so very readable, and I am i.



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for acquainting me with the "Flowers of Friendship" volume

that will live to do with her correspondence.

And may I thank you for telling me something about the plot of the new Cain thriller of which I believe I sent a clipping a while back. I am wondering if his novel about the Red River campaign isn't about ready to make its appearance on the market. It seems ever so far back he was asking if he might use a sketch of the African House for that publication. Perhaps it will be on the autumn list of new things. I think the man is wonderfully talented to be able to do thrillers and more seadate things with equal facility.

I read a little more from volume V of the Washington biography last night. Mr. Freeman has done a splendid job but I think it isn't quite clear to me, --perhaps it wasn't to him, just how it was that every winter the troops had to starve and freeze and go unclothed. For it seems from this account that Valley Forge was merely one winter, --perhaps that of 1776, but the succeeding winters at Morristown, N. J. and where ever, were just about as bad. That there should have been a shortage of food and clothing I can understand but I can't imagine why it had to be that huts for protection against the snow and cold were not finished, say by February when one considers that the Army had been more or less in the same neighborhood for the entire intervening season and it must have been evident to everyone that some sort of shelter other than tents would be required. With lack of guns and ammunition, Washington had to avoid battles, but since the winters of 1778, 1779 and 1780 were all passed in the neighborhood of the New York-New Jersey line, and since the vast problem was trying to find something for the soldiers to do all summer, I am puzzled that huts weren't available and I can't imagine why they weren't. Perhaps I shall find out further along in the book.

A letter from Rock Hall states that the sketch will go forward to you eventually and that both you and I will be advised at time of mailing, so your suggestion, a timely one, was being acted upon as though by telepathy. I suppose it will be two or three weeks before this is accomplished, and let us hope it is after peace and quiet, if any, has been restored. But whatever be the time of receipt, please be assured there need be no thought of rush, for no matter if the likeness doesn't arrive until mid October, that will be ample for our purpose.

I'm thinking about your busy days and hoping that by some miracle, you may grab a breathing space every once

1953

6260

Wednesday, August 26th, 1953.

Memorandum:

"the music of industry" floated over Yucca way from the direction of the gin today. Two bales of cotton, the first of the season, bounced forth. All this was the result of scattered harvesting about the plantation for it is only in spots that the bolls are opening, such as along the edges of the fields where the sun's rays has an opportunity to penetrate a little to split open the bolls.

Today's post brought a wedding invitation to the nuptials of which Irma Somperlyac Willard's son will be one of the contracting parties. Celeste and J. H. received one, too. I had the pleasure of meeting the youth four or five years ago when he passed this way with a class mate, if I remember correctly before he entered Annapolis. Receipt of this invitation, naturally brings up the question of good taste in issuing such items. By my code, I wouldn't be able to send an invitation to someone I had met for an hour years back. And surely nobody in Washington where the ceremony is to take place expects anybody from Louisiana of such slight acquaintance to high their hips thus far afield on such an errand.

Ora told me once of an invitation she received from the parents of a girl whom she knew only by sight, having paid her grocery bill to the girl who chanced to be a cashier in a store Ora sometimes frequented. With the invitation came a notation as to the design of the silver ware and the china pattern of the set she was hoping would be included in her gifts. It seems to me one might just as well specify a Cadillac, a Steinway or a Koorinor while about it. I must drop a line to Helen on this score with the suggestion she write a form letter to be printed in her column when June rolls round again.

But so far as Celeste's and my gift problems were concerned, that was easy. I recommended that Celeste send a Melrose Plantation plate where the groom's mama had spent her honeymoon and I would send a Cane River Country



6261

0838

2881, 4588, 4688, 4688, 4688

which, as it embraces the town of Natchitoches in its design, would remind the youthful couple of the place where their or at least the groom's kin folk live.

I got some more reading done last night and I learned a few things about American History I didn't know before. For instance, I had never before realized how impossible it would have been for Washington to have won if the French fleet had not cooperated. I realized that the fleet had been an integral part of the operation, of course, but I had never before realized what a vital thing it was. Washington, it seems, nearly had a panic when when just as things were getting shaped up perfectly for the triumph of Yorktown, he received a casual note from de Grasse, mentioning that he was intending to sail off to New York with the advent of the first favorable breeze. Fortunately Washington changed his mind on that score and so saved the Revolution. It seems, according to Freeman, that Lafayette was really a wonderful help and that Rochambeau was a splendid aid in the military operations. It was the French officers who sought positions in the American Army who caused so many headaches, and not the ones who fought with their own troops. Von Steuben, it seems, was the only officer in the American Army who had ever been present at a first class siege, -- and that was during his European career, of course. Thus Washington was lucky in having such a man on his staff when the cord began to be tightened around the British at Yorktown and the jig was a bout up. As one follows the course of the war, one is convinced that there wasn't a chance for the American cause to survive and many a contemporary must have been absolutely correct from a point of view of logic in concluding that Washington's case was impossible. I suppose there are few other examples in history as to what can be accomplished through character, patience, persistency and Providence.

The local doings follow the usual pattern, with Winks and pilgrims being much to the fore. As for the Winks, they are growing insufferably bored and I am wondering if they will not be scuffling to terminate their country vacation before the week runs out, I hope.

The thermometer remains high tonight and it is so pleasant to cast a glance in the direction of my jolly ice bucket and anticipate an iced drink for the wind up of Yorktown within another half hour.....

6262

8380

Thursday, August 27th, 1953.

Memorandum:

Tonight's radio reports speak of an unusual heat wave scorching your part of the country, with Washington reporting 111.4 in the sun and New York 95 in the shade.

At this bend of the river, thanks to a prolonged drizzle, which kept up all day although it didn't rain a drop in town, the thermometer has remained in the lower 80's. The farther North one goes, the hotter it gets which certainly seems odd at any time of the year in this hemisphere.

I about finished the Freeman book last night. The details of the last two years of Washington's active military service, -- 1782 and 83 gave many details I hadn't heard before and many of them interested me much. During most of that time, the American Commander retained his headquarters in the Newburg - West Point neighborhood where and when more ample supplies of food, clothing and housing made life for everyone contrastingly bearable, following the lean years just before. One of the first signs of improved conditions was a frolic given for 500 guests in celebration of the news of the birth of a dauphin to Marie Antoinette. Somehow in traveling up the Hudson, I had never thought of the valley resounding to merriment in celebration of the birth of Marie Antoinette's son. I reckon we both have heard thunder rolling through the valleys and bouncing back and forth among the Catskills and, because Washington Irving did such a good job with Rip van Winkle, I had always associated Catskill sounds with Rip's game at ten pins and not with George Washington's sylvan reception in honor of events at Versailles.

And speaking of the latter, I am surprised that a person so careful about minutiae of every sort, Mr. Freeman several times refers to the Treaty ending the Revolution as being signed at Paris, whereas in reality it was actually signed in the Foreign Office at Versailles, -- a building to the left as one faces the Chateau, and situated just across the street from the wing known as the "Galerie des Princes" or what was done over inside to house the vast paintings of battles. I don't see as this fine point makes the slightest difference but I am nevertheless surprised that an author who can get down to the last clod of earth on military arrangements should record that the Treaty of Paris, as it was called, was signed in some place other than where he places it.



3889

6263

Thursday, August 27th, 1953.

Rosalin Aswell telephoned today to ask if she might come down to paint on Tuesday morning, --if she can get away from home. James frowns on her interest in painting, not because he disapproves but simply because he prefers to have her unencumbered by anything which might get in the way of the immediate satisfaction of any casual whim he might have, such as the transcription of a page of his longhand, the preparation of some side dish he might feel inclined to sample or such like. Of course Rosalyn is more versatile than James and in painting and music she is probably fully as talented as he is in writing. Of the two, she probably has the better mind, too, and it is regrettable that his selfish insistence that she shelve everything to respond to his whims whereas she would add as much distinction and probably as much money to the household if he weren't so picayunish. Of course there may be an element of jealousy on the husband's part, too, based on fear that the wife might with her art if her creations were balanced in scales against his offerings. What a pity he didn't take unto himself some doltish Himalya who would revel in expending all her energies in the spitzel department, thereby delighting her husband and leaving an artist free to exercise those talents which, because of their rarity, ought to be nurtured, not suppressed.

Various circumstances, mostly ill timing of visitations by pilgrims, have prevented me from reading the article in Life about The Louvre, although I keep the copy here on my desk to have it handy by for the first opportunity. Do you reckon Edouard Herriot's biography of Madame Recamier was ever brought out in English. It always seemed so odd to me that Monsieur Herriot, so frowns in personal appearance, should be an authority on the life of a lady so famous for her tidy appearance. As I recall, Herriot wrote the biography between Premier'ships. Can you imagine an American counter part, as, for example, an American President, say Grover Cleveland, tossing off an erudite biography of Dolly Madison in the interim between his Presidencies. I am wondering, too, if Madame Recamier's lack of enthusiasm for the portrait might have been based in part on her association in her mind as between the cognas and the painter who, although wonderfully gifted, was certainly a most baggy sort of a bag...

3889

6264

Friday, August 28th, 1953.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your letter of Monday, the 24th, at noon time, in today's post.

And may I congratulate you on the selections you checked against the Library of Congress list. They represented precisely what I should have approved, too. And, like you, I also should have inscribed one great big YES in response to the query as to whether the entire series from 1940 would be desired in the Invitation To Learning business.

Last weekend, I wrote a second letter to Dr. Bryson, with a view to "building a fire" under C B S to permit these recordings. I shall be doubly entranced if the Library of Congress disks are direct transcriptions from the broadcast rather than from the text re-read by a single person.

In the Sunday discussion of Thoreau, Dr. Bryson mentioned something about having a home a hundred miles up the Hudson. What with August being the vacation month, perhaps he has never received my original communication regarding this matter.

It seems a little odd to me, --and I said as much in my last letter to the Library of Congress, that never, so far as I know, has one of the titles which I have suggested, appeared on the list of prospective titles. I shall continue dinging away on this out worn subject on the assumption that whoever is responsible will get tired of the repetition and set forth the desired merchandise in hopes of thus silencing my clack.

It goes without saying that I am delighted to know you you had such a wonderful time at the theatre and I shall of course be delighted to have full particulars. I keep thinking about September 4th and mentally turning over the leaves of the calendar in the hope that on that date or shortly thereafter a measure of peace may return to your routine.

That you should remember Madame Regard's interest in Kentucky floors me. Of course she would be charmed with such



1883

6265

subject matter, and I shall skip any mention of it to her thinking that subsequently when dropping her a card, you may want to touch on the subject which will accordingly be altogether fresh and entrancing to her.

The weather remains humid and cloudy so that little or no cotton is opening. Somebody picked a little over a bale which was placed in the gin last evening, with a view to putting it through the press with dawning, but it burned up during the night. Fortunately the gin wasn't damaged, the cotton having been on a concrete floor and not close enough to the gin stands or oily machinery to set fire to anything.

I shall enclose a letter from the Segleous. I laughed to myself at how funny it sounded when my secretary read the words that sounded like "Tee-bee", and although I had never thought of it before, I guess when writing in English, it would be better to write this abbreviation of "Petite Bebe" as "Tee-Bay". Well, anyhow, you will know of whom they are speaking and that is all that matters. By chance, little Miss Tee-Bay came by to see me during the afternoon and tomorrow the Segleous will have the pictures they requested forwarded to them.

I almost finished Mr. Freeman's final volume last night. His emphasis on all things military, --emphasis at the expense of other considerations, may best be cited, perhaps, in his account of Washington's entry into New York late in 1783, as the British were withdrawing. Marching down the Hudson, Washington finally crosses the Harlem River and, as Freeman observes, with memories of the withdrawal of or from Fort Washington on his right and earlier skirmishes on the sharp rise above the Harlem on his left. As you have already guessed, I was disappointed that Freeman didn't have Washington remember Jumel Mansion of his left, a non- or semi-military feature which would have tended to relieve the unending concentration on the military throughout the volume. Two points Freeman brought up further along, --the strange fact that never between Washington and his mama did there seem to be any affection and although he instructed his brother to supply her with everything she needed, he never once during the 6 or 7 years of the war did he write to her. And the second oddity stems from the fact that Washington was meticulous in being paid during his years of service only those charges falling within a strict military requirement, but--- he did ask for and received payment for all expenses incurred by Martha's several visits to his winter headquarters.....

1883

6266

*Mr. Stirling's resignation*

Sunday, August 30th, 1953.

Memorandum:

The hour was 10:35 this morning and my radio had just said:

"Columbia extends to you an Invitation to Learning....."

and somebody knocked on my door. Naturally I could have died right then and there. It was Irma Somperyac Willard.

And so what Columbia had for its subject matter and what will be on the docket for next week, I haven't the slightest idea.

But I am always glad to see Irma and although she added nothing to the sum total of my knowledge, her three quarters of an hour visit was pleasant. She wanted a couple dozen Cane River plates and I wondered if she was using one of the sets as a wedding gift as of September 12th. Naturally I said nothing as to the nature of the gifts Celeste and I had already forwarded.

She said she planned to spend about a week in the environs of Matchicokes sometime during September 12th and asked if she might come to see me during that span of time. I told her she might at any time except at 10:30 on Sunday mornings. What I have in mind doing is to take her to visit the painter and the wood carver, thinking that as head of the Louisiana State Art Commission, she might be able to do something for each of these artists, either by way of materials or one man shows or some such.

Saturday's post brought the surprising news from Mrs. Stirling that she had resigned. It goes without saying that I am vastly disappointed that she has withdrawn her substantial support from Oakley for much of the good that has gone on in the saving of Oakley, I believe, is attributable to her. Oakley will not be the richer with her no longer on the staff. I am so glad I included her name on the Audubon plate for as far as the Audubon Memorial is concerned, she now moves on into some other sphere, and I find it just and proper that the name of the first curator should thus be preserved for posterity. Not too many public servants are remembered after their tenure of office but as an inspiration to others, it is important that the good ones should be remembered and the plate will make this inevitable.



3889

6267

Through some library mix up, I received volume 2 of the magnificent Century weeks before volume 1 came to hand, and so I dipped into what was cooking in England in the 1200's last night. Without knowing much about the subject, I suppose the thirteenth century was to England what perhaps the 15th was to the Italian cities and that it has always been a little foggy in my mind merely because I had never done much about enlightening myself. One thing which never fails to impress me is the inordinate amount of traveling people did in all the centuries of recorded history of which I have ever heard. Nobody seemed to think anything about going to any old university in the 13th century, no matter where the institution capturing the particular fancy chanced to be. With German and Englishmen going to study at the University of Paris and Germans and Frenchmen going to England to study at Oxford or where ever, it somehow makes 20th century traveling seem comparatively modest in view of all the advantages of locomotion that have come into being in the succeeding 700 years. I suppose one of the wonders of the ancient world is that the Western hemisphere remained unknown for so long to the world in general in spite of the fact that one or two Europeans and probably quite a few Asians had visited what was to become New England on the East coast and Canada on the West coast ages before Columbus bumped into what he thought was China which turned out to be some little old island whose identity has never been established.

And this reminds me that I was impressed the other day when I learned that at least three times the North and South Polar regions have been without ice, and that when all the ice has melted the oceans rise from 300 to 700 feet higher than at present and then the water level goes down again when the polar ice forms again. It's all vast and this knowledge, plus a nickel or a dime would buy one a cup of coffee, I suppose, but to me the coffee with this knowledge thrown in is somehow more tasty.

There was a big clam bake down the road at the Monette's Ferry camp today and so I dined with Madam Regard and the two Wenk children. The pilgrimage business was brisk but I didn't see the Rands. I suppose they have given me up as hopeless.

It's hot and humid tonight and I am casting eyes of yearning at my well stocked ice bucket and I intended getting it to functioning before little Miss Roundtree makes her home.

6268

re: Cousin Reller, descendant of Grandpere

Monday, August 31st, 1953.

One of my Cane River neighbors from whom I hadn't heard in years telephoned me this afternoon to ask for a tour. It was Myra Friedman, a descendant both of Marie Therese and Grandpere, and, of all things, her husband, as the name implies is kin to Sylvan Friedman, of Bayou Lafourche, the Senator to Baton Rouge of this area, although the white Friedman's don't stress the association.

A day just made for splitting open the cotton bolls, Myra the rich huswife, rich in the sense of the word, to come to the 50's. I hazarded the guess that 4 or 6:15 would be more advantageous to avoid the supper hour. There was the little old 3rd floor of the an hour before dark time, and I was glad to see I was a guest so the other people in the house were not too much to their best. I was glad to see the house was so much to in appearance and I was glad to see the house was so much to myself. I was glad to see the house was so much to the big oak gaining for the house was so much to the ladies. I was glad to see the house was so much to the Cane River house for the house was so much to the center of the house for the house was so much to the certain by the way, the house was so much to the "supper with the" and the house was so much to the hobbles. I was glad to see the house was so much to the the people of the house was so much to the heart and the house was so much to the local conditions of the more stupid variety.

I was heartened today to find the enclosed card from the local office about the 20th anniversary of the wonderfully sweet people of the house was so much to the heart very appreciative. The house was so much to the it was a great thing to see the house was so much to the made and the house was so much to the \$50.00 say the house was so much to the house was so much to the have been the house was so much to the mulat and the house was so much to the And the house was so much to the she had the house was so much to the a year 50 as the house was so much to the no person of the house was so much to the portals of the auditorium reserved exclusively for white people. The house was so much to the with the house was so much to the direction lately and she wanted to do something for me and don't let her have one cover which will make her happy and come by this house was so much to the I can't let her have one cover which will make her happy and provide me with an opportunity to bounce something.



**6269** 2.

You may readily imagine how surprised I was when I went to fold the accompanying page and discovered that the Royal hadn't been tracking very clearly.

I think the page contained nothing of any particular interest. I was simply mentioning that I had some 615 pilgrims tonight by appointment. The tour was requested by Myra Friedman, a granddaughter many times of Grandpere who was born a Schlette and who married Reller Friedman, a mulatto whose father was one of the white Friedmans of Bayou Natchez. Syloan Friedman of Natchez is State Representative or Senator at the present time but doesn't go out of his way to point out the relationship between himself and "Cousin Reller".

The six or 8 ladies who accompanied yra were from New Orleans and one of them had an age and a personality so much like Madam Regard that I found myself falling in love with her before the tour really got started.

There was a young school teacher in the group. She teaches dancing in the Parish schools and her suppressed vim and vigor somehow brought to mind that character in Tolstoy's War And Peace, --Helene, I believe was her name, the one of whom Napoleon remarked on catching sight of her at the Opera in St. Petersburg, or it must have been Moscow: "Quelle jolie animale".

Twice I nearly made a blunder in chatting with the girl, for once I came within an inch of saying how much she reminded me of my last year's secretary, Emilee, but that would have been withering, for Emilee is a negress, and that would have killed the high flown mulatto. And again, when she was speaking of interpretive dancing, I came within an inch of asking if she had attended Martha Graham's one man show at the college a year or two back. That certainly would have been a slap, since no person of color would ever be permitted to attend such a performance when held within the sacred to white people auditorium at the local college.

It's all so tiresome, trying to keep in mind that these people of color are actually more fanatical about color than are the whites, and that one must constantly remember not to jockey them into the negro category and at the same time not embarrass them by assuming they might be up to some social business reserved exclusively for the whites. .

And now I must really fold.....

1752

6270

Tuesday, September 1st, 1953.

I think you would like a green panel I fashioned for a background from ceiling to floor in my new house behind the old plantation dock, above which stands the cane river. I told you I had a plan to make a room for you to make such a supreme effort to keep me in touch with things as they swirl about you in this ultra busy time. I am holding the thought that the week end provided much bracing sea breezes and an opportunity to catch your breath in the open air, although I realize, of course, that even in such a setting, things were bound to have been more than amply hurly-burly.

I continue counting off the days until the 4th has been achieved, for then with a departure of all the people intent on a frolic may be well gone and perhaps you will then have an opportunity to catch your breath.

And may I thank you, too, for having found the time, -- and I can't imagine how you did, -- to get off the list to the Library of Congress. Your added suggestions to those appearing on the form sheets sound splendid and others as well as myself. I feel sure, will be indebted to you for having set these recordings on their way to accomplishment.

The summer session of the local schools is finished and my secretaries have be-taken themselves to the cotton patch, even though the bolls are few and far between. This exchange of mental for physical labors has brought about a new schedule for examination of the post with my assistants arriving along about 5:30 with supper at 5:45. I reckon I shall be able to rig up some more leisurely sessions within the next day or two but trying to get ahead of King Cotton South of the Mason-Dixon Line represents something of an undertaking at this season of the year.

While I think of it, -and it is of no importance, you mentioned receiving a clipping several weeks ago, -- an enclosure that seemed to be a column about Melrose and especially Marie Therese. I have just learned that this was from the St. Louis Post Dispatch, and as a result of its appearance in that paper, three different sets of pilgrims have passed this way, two from Missouri, the others from Kansas.



0750

6271

I think you would like a green panel I fashioned for a background from ceiling to floor in the African House behind the old plantation desk, above which hangs the Cane River series. I clipped half a hundred banana leaves, perhaps 12 to 16 inches wide and 5 or 6 feet in length. I folded them the length of the leaf along the central rib and inserted each succeeding fold within the one ahead, making an impressively large set of panels made of lush greenery, and vaguely tailored in appearance. I tied the couple of inches of stems at the top of each on to a bamboo pole, and the whole business fell in pleasantly undulating folds, and the whole thing, after the desk had been put back against them and the plates hung on nails protruding through the pleats, --and the whole thing is quite tropical and gay. Gradually, of course, the green of the great leaves will turn to yellow and brown, and the background will still be pretty for the Cane River plates.

Among the pieces of mail I didn't get around to go into today was an air mail letter from Monks Corner containing an air mail letter from Monks Corner, the latter having been posted August 18th, bearing my name, plus the usual balance of "Melrose Plantation, Melrose, Louisiana". The air mail letter bore a Post Office stamp, indicating that the party to whom the letter was addressed was unknown and could not be located, and the stamp bore the insignia of "The Post Master, Welcome, Louisiana". Who in the world ever heard of Welcome, Louisiana, --what a name to start with, --or end up with, for that matter. And why the dolt, having the word Melrose appearing twice on the envelope, couldn't think of something better than sending it back, I cannot imagine. But the important thing is that it finally came to hand. I shall drop the Post Master of Welcome, La., and his assistant, a note to acquaint him with the fact that there is a Melrose, La., of which, I suppose, he has never heard.

Rosalind Aswell did not make a round today, having telephoned early this morning, saying that she and Jimmy had had to go to Shreveport to see about getting a flag pole for the cemetery and asking if she might come down Friday instead. Friday will be just fine, --fully as fine as Tuesday, and just as unlikely, I think, for like little Miss Ramsey, the Aswells are inclined to be a bit on the unpredictable side....

0750

6272

Wednesday, September 2nd, 1953.

Memorandum:

And so the radio, although not saying so specifically, gives the impression that you, too, are having genuine cotton weather, hot and cloudless. I heard the gin rumbling along so I assume the fleecy stuff must be rolling in although the major portion of the local crop still remains in tightly closed bolls. I suppose Melrose might have air planes spray the fields with that defoliating stuff used by planters employing the mechanical pickers. That chemical seems to burn off the leaves as it touches them but I suppose Melrose could scarcely afford to make use of such an aid since the material would also knock off the leaves from the pecane trees and it is from now until mid October that the pecane leaves produce the sugar without which there would be no crop next year.

The failure of the bolls to get any sunshine, thanks to the heavy leaf coverage means that the dusting to destroy boll worms continues and yesterday the planes gave the place a thorough going over. I am hoping this may be the last time the planes are to be used this year, for, as you know, the chemicals kill the stamens of the banana flowers and so ruin my crop. The flowers that have already unfolded their blossoms will produce but limited fruit this year. Today, however, I discovered three or four big old buds that look as though they might burst into bloom on the morrow and if they do and the dusting period has passed, I really ought to round up some impressive strings of fruit before a November frost writes "Finis" to this season's effort.

The Cotton Council meets in Memphis tonight and tomorrow, and J. H. flew from Alexandria early this afternoon and is supposed to return tomorrow.

La Maybry telephoned yesterday or the day before to ask if she might pass this way today. She might. And she passed this way this afternoon, bringing a friend and a couple of her own granddaughters with her, gals aged about 16, who were nice but still 16. La Maybry is flying to New York on the 17th with a view to going on to Boston and a quick hop to Ireland, the latter jaunt apparently based on the fact that it takes no longer to fly from Boston to Ireland than it does from Boston to New Orleans, and since



6273

6273

she has nothing to do and all day to do it in, speed must naturally be made the most of, even though she has no particular reason for going to Ireland and no time limit on any of her schedules for the balance of the year. Off hand I should not imagine autumn would be the best season to select for Irish travel but since one isn't interested in anything special to start with, I suppose the inside of a few hotel lobbies in Ireland would be about as convenient as any place else.

I talked with Ora this morning. She said she had been holding the thought that if her household survived until Tuesday when her daughter would head out for college, peace would be wonderful thereafter. And then the daughter departed and peace came down so heavy that she wished her daughter were back again. She said that J. H. Williams is having a pitiful case of the blues because his daughter went off to college yesterday. Last year he wouldn't let her go, feeling his household of a wife and a younger daughter couldn't stand the strain of her absence, and it took no end of jockeying this year to get him to consent to her matriculation. I hadn't thought so much about these strains on the parents before, but suppose both those who are leaving as well as those who are left feel the void. Dr. and Mrs. Erwin of the local college started their son off in medical school at L. S. U. New Orleans last week end. They have already telephoned him to come back to Natchitoches for the Labor Day week end. Somehow it all reminds me so much of Leston and all the excitement that attended his departure for school "way up North in Natchitoches".

And speaking of the New Orleans L. S. U. Medical School, I must say it was pleasant to hear from Friend Postell again. I shall enclose his note if I can set hand to it. I recalled the other day that he has done quite a bit of research on several Natchez physicians which led me to conclude he might be able to tuck these into appropriate settings so as to revolve around Dr. John W. Monette and call the thing "The World of Dr. John W. Monette", - the type of title which gives any author all the latitude in the world for wandering far afield from the biography is is hanging his book on. I know a few things about Dr. Monette and some of his offspring which I have learned from members of his family which I shall be glad to contribute to the Postell effort, if ever undertaken. One of my New Orleans acquaintances secured a stack of Monette manuscripts from a somewhat stupid son, and Mrs. Brandon has told me much about another who conducted an insurance business successfully for years in New Orleans without ever actually seeing any of his customers, as he suffered from Hansen's disease although none of his clients ever suspected he was a leper. So things jog along and

6274

6274

Thursday, September 3rd, 1953.

Memorandum:

This date seems to be a good one from which one may pause momentarily and glance backward, for it was about 15 years ago today, if I remember correctly, that I first passed along this bend of the river.

If I recall aright, September 3rd, 1938 was a boilingly hot Saturday. But here we are on a Thursday and the weather is cloudy, humid and the promise of a high of 76 for the

morrow. Mrs. Moore, Christian and I met so many new people that day, Lyle being the only one we had known before, --the Madam, Joe, Eugenia and Pat, Dan, Paynie, J. H., Clif Byrd, Dr. Miller, Joe and Celine Rocque are some of the ones I remember. It was about noon or 12:30 when we arrived and I remember Victoria's buxom figure as she appeared to give us dinner, the mother of the Dark Duke and Peter, whose portrait by little Miss Alberta hangs in my boudoir. I remember exploring Cane River a little that afternoon, St. Augustin's Church, Zeline's house and so on. And after first dark I recall the twinkling of lights from all the windows of the big house and all the other buildings in the gardens, and especially the heaps of yellow cotton upstairs in the African House where the Madam and Clif Byrd were stirring up some kind of a sewing bee. And I remember Yucca so distinctly, the scent of marvelous flower perfumes drifting along both front and back galleries. And I remember how oceans of drinks seem to flow from Lyle's stock after he and Christian and I had said goodnight to other residents of Melrose and how exhausted I was through lack of sleep during the past 48 hours when we had driven from New Orleans to Natchez to pick up Madam Moore, having had car trouble on the way, so we had failed to reach Roan's party but met all her guests in a Natchez restaurant at midnight or thereafter, so we never did get any sleep before it was time to head out for the Cane River country.

And quite clear yet remains that moment when Lyle handed me another powerful highball and moved an electric fan which



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brought the breeze directly across a big vase of sweet, sweet, sickening sweet flowers, sweeping it so directly in my direction that the next thing I knew it was morning, and Christian was asleep in the West room of Yucca and Lyle had left the boudoir and was sitting on the edge of my cot in the living room and was reading me, clad in pajamas, from Old Louisiana, and Frank Morin interrupted to serve an expansive tray of black Louisiana coffee.

That Sunday was Lyle's birthday but there was no particular celebration since the whole place was hurly-burly anyway. And I remember in the morning, - hot, sunny and dusty, heading out for St. Augustin's where a baptisin' was on the docket. Pat was forever flying in and out of the car to open gates of which there seemed to be dozens as between here and Little River. And there was the Reverend Sauerwell, walking majestically across the cotton fields, toasting a neatly folded coat he would never need over one arm and carrying a sachel, containing his Bible, in the other.

And Monday I remember Lyle leaving at 5 a.m. for New Orleans, making us promise to pass that way on our way back from Natchez to Manhattan, and I remember how Christian and I sat in the Yucca living room along about 2 p.m. waiting for Mrs. Moore to send word that she was ready to leave, and how Christian voiced a certain sadness in quitting this unique place for ever and how he must have thought me out of my mind when I expressed the impression I felt that we would come back again. And then by 2:30 we were gone and heading back toward Mississippi and Lord, how the years have rolled since then.

Thanks to the cloudy weather this afternoon, the planting of a new dab of zinnias seemed in the cards. I had saved some of the seeds you sent me during the winter, and what with the gigantic stand along the front of Yucca's gallery having been pushed about by the wind, I took them up and in their place put a few dozen narcissus bulb for late November flowering. In between the rows, I planted the zinnias, figuring that within 50 days, the zinnias will be in full flower and after the frost has returned them to the earth, the narcissus will be emerging and thus the floral pattern, although quite different in pattern, will remain constant, the white of the narcissus replacing the white of the zinnias and the perfume of the narcissus substituting, --a mighty pale substitute, -- for the butterfly lilies.

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6276

6276

Friday, September 4th, 1953.

Memorandum:

This is the day peace, or a reasonable facsimile thereof is supposed to return to Manhattan and I am holding the thought that this has actually been achieved.

The cool Canadian flow of air struck this area about midnight and by one o'clock this morning it was drizzling a little. The ensuing day was cloudy and cool, --in the upper 70's, and we are promised clear skies and a low of 55 before morning. Frankly, I don't need such arctic temperatures so soon in the season and would gladly exchange them with some of Manhattan's 90's, if none of the latter are required for metropolitan banana and zinnia crops.

The postman brought me a special delivery letter from the Segleaus this morning. As I am usually at the post office when the mail arrives, a special delivery seen among the more useless things, so far as I am concerned. The letter was another long one and very pleasant. It contained an address concerning some perfume, or the address of a manufacturer of perfume about which Mr. Pipes wanted particulars and so I shall send the letter to him first.

In the same post came a sweater, knitted by Mrs. George Sutton. It seems to be a very nice one and quite an apt gift in view of the present cool spell. You may recall that the George Suttons purchased without transfer of cash the Natchitoches property of Mr. Bachelier, just before the latter's death. I know not if the sweater be conscious money, so called, or not, but I shall accept it as the gift of a friend and hope the Suttons never dream I know about the Bachelier business.

And speaking of the Suttons and Mr. Bachelier reminds me of Father Becker, and I think I have probably reported that he is living in a fine house of his own in South Louisiana but has been unfrocked and forbidden to preside over a church again. After 35 or 40 years of being so firmly entrenched at Cloutierville, I suppose he indulged in about all the rascality he could, and while the removal is "better late than never", it seems to me pretty late and I think the Church authorities were



6277

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I expected E. Roscoe Morrow's return on Monday to be announced tonight by Larry Lasseur but I didn't hear any mention of the matter in the first two-thirds of the broadcast which I was able to hear. Perhaps it was mentioned later, --I hope.

J. H. returned home sometime during the night. He said he had taken a Memphis plane for New Orleans but the latter had had to stop somewhere for repairs and he figured he could make it by bus in quicker time than he could wait for the mechanics to fix up the plane.

The clerk told me that Sister had gone to New Roads to spend the week end with her uncle and that she will pick up her son, John, on Monday when she heads back for home.

I have several appointments for the week end, and I suppose many would be road runners will be making the most of the holiday. Along about supper time tonight, two young ladies and a young gentleman stopped for a tour. They said they hailed from, --of all places, -- Meridian, Mississippi. At least der schoene Adloph never did go on a jaunt to Jersu salem. Naturally I treated them with special courtesy and took particular pains to refer frequently in the picture gallery section to various "colored ladies" and "colored Gentlemen", and relished the unhappy state of mind they seemed to exude when I got around to "one of Louisiana's most distinguished colonial citizens, Marie Therese, the black lady from the Cong I thought they were going to "bust" on that one.

They asked me if I had ever heard of the old houses they have in Hachez, Miss., and I admitted that I had heard people refer to them. This gave them an opportunity to "tell all" and although that, at best, was dull, it is always interesting to get the reaction of the hill billies to the river bottom folks.

I was rather expecting to have a line from several people today, including Robina, whose health is much improved, I hope. And what in the world do you suppose ever happened to Cousin Ouida and Cousin Josephine. Somehow I got the idea they were planning to pass this way in August, but not a peep has come from their direction either.

6278

6278

Sunday, September 6th, 1953.

Memorandum:

Both Saturday and today put forth the finest weather of the year, --all blue and gold, with a daytime upper 70 and a night time of middle 60's. It has been comparatively quiet, too, and although the pilgrims have put in an appearance, their number has been small, their mentality of dubious quality, and a slight case of sniffles on my part making me comparatively indifferent to the occasional impulse to create an interest on the part of those who obviously have scant or slight capacity for any such element.

Joe arrived from Conroe last evening a round supper time. I had an opportunity to chat with him alone after dinner across the fence this noon, just before he headed back home. He told me he was thinking of retiring, possibly in November or December and that he plans building a home in Hatchitoches. He spoke as though he had been having disagreements with the Gulf States Utilities with whom he has been associated so long. Perhaps that is what is stepping up his intention to retire shortly. He says he has sufficient to live on comfortably and that J. H. assured him that none of the Henrys would have to worry about money regardless of their individual financial standings. That suggests imposingly impressive worldly goods. Joe said J. H. had recently paid \$37,500.00 for a Montrose property which had been purchased in Pat's name. Not bad for "us poor folks", as J. H. likes to say on occasion. Pat is expected back in November or December and is scheduled to assume some of the plantation details for J. H., but knowing J. H. as I do, he will forever keep his hand on the Melrose pulse uninterruptedly, although he may do more gadding about, if that be possible. Joe said that Dan made \$21,000.00 last year, due in large measure to insurance business thrown in his direction by J. H. As Dan continues drinking



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immoderately, one cannot help wondering how long Lady Luck will smile in that direction. I guess that is all I learned from Joe but for a ten minute chat, that seemed to be fairly illuminating.

I want to make a mark on the wall, indicating that for once I heard Invitation to Learning from beginning to end today. If you heard it, you undoubtedly enjoyed the discussion of the famous Japanese novel whose title I never remember and whose author I invariably forget. "The Story of Genji" or some such by a Japanese Court lady who was born about the year 1001, is a story I have tried to read several times but never got very far. I recall that Mildred Jonas was very fond of it but I guess she is the only person I ever knew who had read and re-read it. Perhaps circumstances were inauspicious when I attempted the thing on two or three occasions. But my lack of enthusiasm in my memory concerning the volume in no way detracted from the interest I felt in the discussion. One point which nobody brought out is one I should like to know and perhaps shall learn eventually. They spoke of the novel as being about Court life by an author who was really an insider. I have long wondered if the tale as spun by the lady was of her own era or if it was, in that far off time, a story dealing with generations before her advent on the scene.

I was delighted to hear it announced at the end of the broadcast that next Sunday's discussion would be devoted to Machiavelli's The Prince. There are lots of other things I should prefer but I know that Ora Williams is preparing a club paper on just that subject for sometime this season and this should be mana from an intellectual heaven for her.

Just for fun and because I hadn't talked with her in ages, I telephoned the lady doctor last evening to inquire after her health and the success of her husband's new business as head of the local Borden's Mill office. She spoke of the gadget she has had attached to her telephone which records incoming messages, covering a 28 second period, which she can refer to when convenient. She says she knows a Baton Rouge physician who installed one solely so he could play bridge in the evening and not be disturbed while at game and yet eventually catch his calls. In her own case, she says, she finds people rattle off their ailments and then forget to identify themselves before 28 minutes have elapsed which is something else again.....

1833

6280

Monday, September 7th, 1953.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your air mail of Thursday in today's post. It is restful just to learn that placidity was just around the corner at the time you wrote and that there were prospects for a comparatively quiet week end, in the wake of all the huddles that have been yours for too long of late.

I was in a mild panic when the radio reported some Panamanian steamship as being forced to turn back to port because of the hurricane passing along the Atlantic coast. I automatically told myself I could imagine nothing worse for putting a crimp in the promised quiet than having the whole bunch of S. A.'s suddenly doing a repeat performance, but relief came to quiet my forebodings when everything reported over the air indicated that the regular passenger liners were proceeding on schedule.

With the hurricane just off the coast today, I suppose the Manhattan weather has been inclement for out of door activities. I hope this hasn't put a crimp in your plans for a measure of solitude. And I am hoping further that you have been mighty busy today doing nothing, for you ought to catch your breath a little, now that this rare opportunity has presented itself. But as I envision it, the all too, brief period somehow suggests it may turn out to be something akin to that marvelous line I once heard a radio announcer solemnly refer to as "an interlude of transcribed silence".

What a commentary on the rattle-t-bang civilization in which we live when silence may be achieved only by transcription.

I hope that for those who need entertainment, this Labor Day has been a Frolic Day. Surely lots of people have been in the big road and quite a few of them have found their way



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to this bend of the river. For the road runner, the time table operating without design on anybody's contrivance, brought passing pilgrims here in perfect dove-tailing so that I have been pretty much on the go from morning until this hour of 8:30. For the most part, today's batch of people have been definitely on the dumb side, people adrift with nothing to do and all day to do it, and quite incapable of wanting anything more at Melrose than to kill time. But even these dumb ones can contribute something, as I discovered when, bogged down with a batch of them, Sister came to pick up her offspring, and either through lack of inclination to see me or perhaps because I had pilgrims, she made her appearance at the store, picked up her passengers, and got on her way without ever encountering me.

I thought I had seen the last of today's quote of people by 5:30 when Ed and Horace Rand appeared. They came in to chat for a bit and in the midst of it a couple of secretaries arrived. I left my guests long enough to read your letter, chunking the other mail aside until the morrow. The Ed and Horace contingent remained until after the supper hour and as they got into their car to leave, a car containing some of their Alexandria acquaintances plus some New Orleans people arrived. I should have not received them, had the Rands already departed, but under the circumstances I thought I might as well add one more to the list of tiresome people, what with the structure of day already in a shambles.

Although definitely on the way out, my sniffles linger on and probably made me more indifferent as to whether school kept or not. Juanita fixed me an appetizing plate and after this little chat with you, I shall go in for some lemonade and then my supper, after which, by pulling the covers over my head, I shall indicate in pantomime that 1953's frolic-some Labor Day has been completed.

Ora telephoned today for some points concerning the ante bellum owners of some nearby property. She said she is just getting into the Ben Ames Williams book and finds it altogether to her liking. I suppose the "House Divided" is the predecessor of this volume, and I must inquire from somebody if the latter has been recorded as yet. Oddly enough I know not where to inquire regarding this point since the New Orleans Public Library never answers any letters, apparently, and the Library of Congress usually skips acknowledgement of such inquiries. But tonight I shall need no literature to put me to sleep. If yours, too, has been a laborious Labor Day, I hope rest follows in fulsome measure...

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6282

Tuesday, September 8th, 1953.

Memorandum:

You will observe the Royal has a new ribbon. This is the first time Peter has tried his hand at making the change on this machine and I find myself inclined to hold my breath momentarily 'til such a time as the thing has moved along far enough to indicate it will reverse alright, thereby indicating that the job presented no insoluble difficulties.

Little King and Peter dropped in at first dark and although the gaiety of conversation did not offer the ideal moment for concentrating on threading a typewriter, I was under the impression the old ribbon was getting a little faint and it might be as well to make the most of the deft hands present.

When two old friends such as Little King and Peter get together is invariably entertaining, and I was particularly enchanted with Peter's imitation of Bill Billy's manner of speaking. He told of a Sunday afternoon when he was waiting for someone on the store gallery when the young couple stopped in a car and gave a glance at the Holmes layout and how one of the young ladies said to her companion:

"There's an old nigger there...ask him how we get into the place". --and then, when addressed, he had belatedly Mr. Francis was the man to contact and they had said, "What's your name?" --Philip", and then Peter had said: "The 'm, that's the one to ask, J.P. -- Philip. -- and if you can't find Philip, there ain't no use a tryin' to make it."

And so, as the boys were comparing old time notes, the Royal ribbon was adjusted and, for good measure, a new ribbon was added to the Underwood. Thanks for your gift of the new ribbon which you presented to me on July 11th.

Little King went on eye of jamming at the times spinning the ribbon, spinning that as they are transparent.



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to this bend of the river. For the road runner, the time table operating without design on anybody's contrivance, brought passing pilgrims here in perfect dove-tailing so that I have been pretty much on the go from morning until this hour of 8:30. For the most part, today's batch of people have been definitely on the dumb side, people adrift with nothing to do and all day to do it, and quite incapable of wanting anything more at Melrose than to kill time. But even these dumb ones can contribute something, as I discovered when, bogged down with a batch of them, Sister came to pick up her offspring, and either through lack of inclination to see me or perhaps because I had pilgrims, she made her appearance at the store, picked up her passengers, and got on her way without ever encountering me.

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Little King cast an eye of glancing at the boxes containing the ribbons, saying that as they are transparent,



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Wednesday, September 9th, 1953.  
Two such women who, both talented, expended their energies so much in behalf of the cause of a single historic character, as these two, and in it interesting that one lives at Wakefield the other at Wakefield, -- somehow the names seem so interchangeable.

But the opposition to Mrs. Stirling has been stirred up and fanned into flame solely, as the matter stands but people believe, Mrs. Stirling was not to be outdone but across the line in Baton Rouge Parish and therefore she should be represented, so I hope this page turns out to be something unlike last night's memo which you couldn't read at all, I suppose. At the Post Office this morning, I learned that all the letters I had written after the ribbon had been changed had to be doctored. Tonight I have had the ribbon worked on again, but have typed the envelope before beginning this note, thinking that the envelope at least may be readable.

I can recall nothing of interest in yesterday's memo so if you couldn't make anything out of the faint script, you will have lost nothing.

Tonight I do want to tell you a bit of gossip which may have no foundation but which may, and as the parties concerned are known to us, the particulars may prove mildly interesting, true or untrue.

According to a New Orleans pilgrim of a day or two back, who had stopped off at Oakley on her way up here, -- the lady is of ancient Louisiana lineage, -- it is generally understood in the Felicianas that the successful attempt to force Mrs. Stirling out of her position as curator was spear-headed by a prominent Saint Francisville lady, primarily on the grounds that Mrs. Stirling, although the wife of a resident whose family came to the Felicianas among the earliest settlers, Mrs. Stirling was not born in the Parish, but across the line in Baton Rouge Parish. It is generally agreed by all that two St. Francisville ladies have made wonderful contributions to the perpetuation of the fame of John James Audubon, Mrs. Lester by her speeches across the State on the subject of Audubon in general and his painting in particular, and by the enormous amount of reproductions she has made of his drawings. And the other, Mrs. Stirling, shares in the honor of having done equally as much if not more by her efforts, -- almost single-handed, to effect the creation of the Memorial Park by the State, her tireless devotion to the place after it was purchased, her speaking tours across the country on the subject of Oakley and Audubon, etc., etc.



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1883

I suppose no other State, perhaps no other community ever had two such women who, both talented, expended their energies so much in behalf of the fame of a single historic character, as these two, and isn't it interesting that one lives at Waverly the other at Wakefield, -- somehow the names seem so inter-changeable.

But the opposition to Mrs. Stirling has been stirred up and fanned into flame solely, as the native born St. Francisville people declare, Mrs. Stirling was not born in Feliciana but across the line in Baton Rouge Parish and therefore she should not be permitted to hold down the place she does, so representative of Oakley and Audubon. There never has been any criticism of Lois Lester on this score, for although she was born and reared in New Orleans, she has perhaps never done quite so much for St. Francisville as Mrs. Stirling. As that as it may, and as the newspapers indicated, Mrs. Stirling was actually forced out of her job, St. Francisville, the Felicianas and Louisiana thereby losing the services of one of its most generous and capable servants. And what is interesting about all this, according to my informant, is the identity of the individual who has spear-headed the attack from the beginning, and now, unfortunately proven so successful. You have a ready guess the name, Lois Lester.

Naturally I am bound to do a bit of checking on this matter. At the moment I am knocked flat by the thought that it may be true.

Today's pilgrims stemmed primarily from Minnesota and California. Along about 5 p.m., I heard someone calling "F.....are you sleeping". I didn't recognize the voice but realized it must be someone who knew me on a rather friendly basis. It turned out to be some California number, -- breezy as some Westerners are reputed to be. She is going a thing whose title suggests its subject, -- "The Great Raft". She had two secretaries with her. They jotted down everything passing between the visitor and me, and my first paragraph of flattening the bag out will probably make "shame-faced" reading.

But I gave her more data than she could assimilate and said "But, No", when she asked to see the big house. She must be a female Harriett Kane, no time for manners and no time for research, -- and yet half an hour on Cane River would be suffice, I suppose, to provide either of them with ample material for a popular novel.

Well, save for the weather, which remains marvelous, this is all I know. I haven't heard the E. Roscoe Morrow news this week, but I did hear another hurricane is boiling....

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6286

Thursday, September 10th, 1953.

Memorandum: The perfect weather continues and if one is to judge by the number of pilgrims continuing to pass this way, none of them have learned yet that August, the vacation month, is over.

Last night I wasn't very sleepy and accordingly finished the 1962 novel of Peggy Bacon, -- *The Inward Eye*, a Scribner publication. I found it an entertaining story of a conservative young couple in Greenwich Village but thought the book stupidly named and the whole thing lopped off with a meat ax at the close. Miss Bacon is an artist at thumb nail sketching of people but I have always preferred oil to steel engravings. Somehow I got the impression that the manuscript was probably much longer and that it was the fault of some Editor that the thing got whittled down with such amazing speed at the end. The book is not the type one would re-read but were a sequel to pop up, one would probably turn through it to see what happened next.

A package from the Segleaus arrived yesterday and one from Maison Blanche of New Orleans at the same time; the Segleau containing a hand knitted sweater, -- a lovely yellow, probably fashioned by Madame Segleau and much in the same style as a like sweater from Mrs. Sutton the other day. The Maison Blanche package likewise contained a sweater, not hand knit probably but of the same style and gray in color. From where I sit, it looks as though the plantation might not freeze this winter. I shall have to write Maison Blanche to ask who sent that particular one and then, after that, I may be able to decide which of the three I shall reserve for my own use. A letter from Dora speaks about some jacket being on its way and I suppose it will arrive on the morrow. It is certainly sweet of Dora to bounce so many garments in my direction, but with the thermometer in the 90's, I must say three sweaters and a winter jacket seem to be rushing the season a

Well, so much for this sitting. Do you reckon the Cooper River ought to be coming into view soon.....



6287

Thursday, September 10th, 1953.

The batch of letters in this morning's post were of no particular moment although it is always nice to hear from Madam Marco and the invitation from Lionel Jeanmard is pleasant to receive although it will never be accepted. The Holloman epistle seems to indicate that that lady welcomes any cooperation I want to extend in the direction of her pet problems but that she herself isn't dreaming of making the prospect a two way street. But I do not mind such an attitude for believing as I do in furthering any project that seems to be on the positive side, I don't mind if the other person fails to do likewise for I proceed on the theory of the parable about the guy likely to get the most bread is the one who casts it on the waters. And so, if la Holloman feels inclined to hang tight to her loaf, that is alright by me. Then, too, I recognize that Luck may have provided me with a bigger batch of the stuff than was handed out to her so that it is no virtue on my part to be tossing the stuff about with greater abandon.

One A Talking Book came today, -- "The Liberal Imagination" by Lionel Twilling or Trilling or whatever. It seems to me I have in times gone by read something by Mein Ieber Trilling or Twilling, -- what a name, however spelled, and I am looking forward to dipping into a couple of essays before folding up my beard.

Returning to the Holloman letter, in passing, I must say the woman's somewhat scatter-brained presentation of the Metoyer business is more or less typical of her "chicken with its hat off" tendency. She mentions a murder committed by a Metoyer of whom, as you know, there are millions, and suggests a letter to Lawyer Hunter or Sheriff Kelly, which ought to be delivered by Wednesday or Thursday. With this communication, reaching me on Thursday and no out-going mail before Friday, how I could turn out the letter in time, even if I knew anything about the identity of the person involved, is beyond me. At least about in this neighborhood, asking half a dozen different Metoyers about the murder and trying to determine which Metoyer was about to go on trial but nobody locally seems to have heard of the thing. Somebody thought that one of the Balthazars killed somebody last year but had forgotten which one and didn't know if the case had gone to trial. Of course Balthazar and Metoyer are precisely the same kettle of fish but I'm not sure la Holloman knows much about who is talking.

Well, so much for this dual sitting. Do you reckon the Cooper River trailer ought to be coming into view soon.....

9852

6288

Friday, September 11th, 1953.

How nice to have your perfectly elegant letter of Sunday in today's post. Your picture of the forlorn appearance of the trees along the Concourse is so graphic I almost feel I can see their poor naked limbs. Thank heavens the cool spell descended upon you ~~at~~ at the conclusion of the endless visitation, and it is inspiring to know that the balance of the week provided such a break.

And may I thank you for the copy of Antiques which arrived in the same post with your letter. I am so glad to have this item and may I thank you for marking it so clearly for me so that every detail could so easily be consulted. The picture of The Shadows is lovely and I have enjoyed the article on early Louisiana treasures is an inspiration urging one to meditate on others along parallel lines. My impatience to explore all marked places was accomplished with such gusto that I find myself wanting to start all over again right now. I am letting Celeste look at the issue tonight and shall enjoy a second going over of the pages on the morrow.

Your reference to the pleasant reaction she would have experienced on the Long Island frolic made me laugh in my beard. How fortunate you had someone with whom you could chat when sleep seemed so impossible, what with all the racket going on.

It would be difficult for me to convey to you how indebted I am for your thoughtfulness in sending along the news regarding volume 6 of the Freeman Washington. I was particularly anxious that the author might have had a go at Washington's return to domesticity on the Potomac and now this supposedly futile wish has been realized. As I may have mentioned, I was wishing especially that Freeman might



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go into the "royal progresses" Washington made up and down the country, assuming the Freeman inclination to do step-by-step military data might give way to a step-by-step description of the houses the Chief Executive visited. It would seem to me this might well be in this volume 6, and while it would be nice if it were available right now, I can keep control of my patience until another year has made its rounds, awaiting the advent of this item, for the knowledge of its existence is enough to fill me with pleasure for a twelfth month.

I was on the point of writing the publishers when your letter brought the news of the Freeman volume for I had thought the publishers might have made arrangements with Freeman assistants or some associate to bring the biography into a close in a final chapter, set forth in a style and a regard for detail similar to that characterizing the first 5 volumes. Now my question has been answered and I am entranced at the whole business.

And may I tell you how much I appreciate your kindness in acquainting me with the metamorphosis of Illustration from a weekly to a monthly publication. I have always thought such an idea wouldn't be bad, since the extra time allowed ought to enable the publishers to do something a bit more tremendous with each of the annual 12 numbers, as opposed to the long time schedule of 52 per year. Even as is today, so Illustration may eventually emerge as a travel magazine of European treasures, I hope. The width of its scope in the variety of subject matter and accompanying color work could be compressed into 12 volumes to advantage, or rather quite the opposite, --not compressed into one volume but scattered through twelve issues, and I think everyone would be happy.

Beau Mack returned to Melrose today and plans to remain until Christmas, I believe. I got a haircut immediately, trust to no possible change of mind. What interests me more, however, is the fact that Juanita will probably remain mistress of the pot and pan department for another two or three months, and that means much.

I shall put an envelope over the Conroe newspaper I received today and send it along. I read J. H.'s copy and found the article quite misleading in its statement that all the data came from me. It certainly didn't, but I do see evidences of Victor Little, Harnett Kane, Ethel Holloman and all the rest. Thanks again for giving me such a happy day.....

8883

6290

Sunday, September 13th, 1953.

Memorandum: I had an opportunity to examine the copy of the Freeman volume for I had thought the publishers might have made arrangements with Freeman assistants or some associate to bring the biography into a close in a final chapter, set forth in a style and a regard for detail similar to that characterizing the first 5 volumes. Now my question has been answered and I am entranced at the whole business.

I mention all this because it stands as an exception to J. H.'s usual tendency to finish off matters so promptly and often in considerable advance of potential needs, as for example, the putting of the gin in order in the Spring as opposed to many a planter who waits until cotton time before studying about it. I shall of course let you know if and when any advertisements are purchased.

The weather continues to reflect the perfection of Indian Summer. The pilgrims were few over the week end and those who came were sympathetic souls. Mr. and Mrs. Hughes of Little Rock, professional photographers, I believe, spent much time with their cameras on Saturday afternoon. I think we shall hear from them in the weeks ahead. They have been journeying up from New Orleans, taking pictures of old plantation homes and gathering quite a collection of interesting shots, I imagine. They spoke at some length of various years they have recorded the progression in decline of Belle Grove, years which are punctuated by camera studies, which ought to be interesting. They have also rounded up earlier photographs taken by others, so that their collection covers such years as 1900, 1927, 1937, 1941, 1946 and 1953.

They were impressed, they said, by the deeper hue the ruins have taken on, perhaps because of the fire, perhaps as a result of surface exposure to the weather following the fire, with the pink quality of earlier times deepening into red. I believe they may send some pictures, and if so I shall send



0030

6291

them along for our scrapbooks.

I was delighted this afternoon when my old secretary, Mr. Breur, came to see me. He had brought his wife and child over from Houston for the week end. I think it means much to him to get his feet planted momentarily on Cane River soil again from time to time.

I had an opportunity, although not half long enough to cover all, to examine further the copy of Antiques, and again I marvel at all the interesting things you had found and checked for my attention. Yes, the Wedgewood pastille burner with the dolphin supports on the triangular base was or is precisely the one of which I was speaking. As I recall, I had run across mine for a song, perhaps \$15.00 or \$20.00, in one of those things over which one stumbles but never discovers when searching for. Oddly enough, I disposed of mine when a season of darkness was descending, --and at a figure that was perfectly ridiculous, --several hundred dollars, although I have forgotten the exact sum. That you should have found a likeness of this item is truly remarkable.

And may I thank you for pointing out the reference to the murder case, merely touched on, concerning one of the earliest sculptors in this country. Surely we should know something more about all this and I think I shall channel a note through the office of the magazine to the writer in hopes we may uncover some interesting particulars about this whole business. How odd a sculptor should take himself to this remote region in the 1760's. Let us hope your discerning eye has started something on this trail that will lead to something of unusual interest before we have pursued it very far.

You will be glad to note from Mina's letter that she is apparently well on the mend. I believe her husband is living in Baton Rouge. What a pity Mina is still in love with him while he apparently is still infatuated with his first wife who lives in the Baton Rouge area, I believe.

I neglected to jot down the three plates she says she has. I you will make a note of them, I shall be glad so I may send her the missing ones after the Joyous Coast design has appeared.

I perhaps have mentioned in times gone by that Mina's husband borrowed fifty thousand dollars from her, ostensibly for business purposes, and used it to secure a life insurance policy, made out in favor of the first wife, which Mina doesn't know, although she is still waiting for him to pay back the money.

Well, so things revolve and so must I again express my indebtedness to you for having provided me with so much pleasure through the medium of Antiques....

0030

6292

Monday, September 14th, 1953.

Memorandum: I have just received your letter of the 10th inst. and in such a short time I shall have it in my hands.

How nice to find your Tuesday-Wednesday letter in today's post. I believe I touched on the matter of Regout, the sculptor, in last night's memo. I am naturally fascinated by the prospect of delving into this man's career. It goes without saying that it strikes me as odd that I must start in at some remote situation such as St. Louis or some such but I know of no one in Hatchitoches where he lived who would be likely to have ever heard of him. That gentleman by the name of Lansford of the Delgado Museum ought to have some particulars but I am under the impression he is writing letter to the country of the Hatchitoches at the moment. Come to think of it, I guess the Segleaus know him, and I might drop them a line to make a little inquiry on my behalf.

It goes without saying that I am bound to explore the career of this man to the utmost of my ability, and again my thanks to you for having brought him to my attention. I think I shall ask Ordo to set her husband on the trail of the records in the Court House, scanty though they be. Perhaps R. B. will stumble over the name in pursuit of some of his legal work. It's going to be fun trying to pick up the scent.

I just noticed I was giving this page an unusual margin and I pause to correct same. I find it remarkable that so many of the early pieces of Louisiana furniture have found their respective ways to such far flung situations. I have no doubt the writer of the article would be especially interested in the story of the local bidet, and he might be surprised to learn such a convenience was

.....two short weeks ago



3889

6293

in existence at such an early period and in such a far-away locality. I shall mention it when I write him.

I am glad you mentioned the return of Mrs. R., as I had lost track of her and did not realize she had returned from the Far East. I did not hear the program, but it goes without saying that I should have relished it.

Ora was delighted that invitation to Learning did Machavelli's The Prince on Sunday and telephoned me to say as much. She is doing a paper on that gentleman sometime during the impending season. I notice that next week's symposium will have to do with "Alice au pays des merveilles", - a subject I hope we both may hear. Personally, I never cared for the book, and as a child, the illustrations frightened me. I assume Mr. Bryson and company will agree the book wasn't the best ever written for children and I doubt very much if many children like it. Perhaps as fare for grown-ups it might do nicely but I never tried reading it after my earliest attempts in childhood and so have much to learn from Sunday's discussion.

I am glad you weren't too bored by my memories of my initial visit to Melrose. The matter you mentioned regarding my initial habitation inclines me to explain, although I have no doubt you have it clear in your mind, - my initial visit in 1938 revolved about Yucca. When, a year later in 1939 I returned for a longer, - it turned out to be a much longer visit, I spent some time in the ancient kitchen which later became little Miss Alberta's pet place for painting. At the time, I resist all efforts on Aunt Cammie's and Lyle's parts to take up my residence at Yucca, for I labored at the time under the impression that Lyle owned Yucca. After I discovered he did not, I fell in with their recommendations, actually taking up my residence here in the Spring of 1940, I believe.

Celeste spent the day in Alexandria and so J. H. dined at the big house and gave me a sly glance when he asked if I could use the truck load of stuff he had sent me at dawn. It was an enormous truck load of cotton hulls and I treasure them mightily for gardening purposes, and the more so because all cotton hulls are supposed to be burned this year to help eradicate the pink boll worm. But when somebody wasn't looking, J. H. had channeled a load of them to me, and as human beings are never satisfied, I expressed the hope I might get another surprise or two of equal proportions before the season runs out.....

3889

6294

Tuesday, September 15th, 1953.

emorandum:

Lovely weather.....

And by chance, I returned from Arenbourg at 2 o'clock this afternoon, somewhat adrip, - the thermometer in the upper 90's, and just as I reached my boudoir, the telephone rang. Alexandria calling....a voice.... and it said:

"This is your South Carolina girl friend...."

And there was la Storm, saying she and Kay were just leaving, and asking if they might stop here in about an hour. I am forever figuring time incorrectly, as in the present instance, laboring under the illusion that an hour from 2 o'clock suggested three o'clock. What it actually was spelled out 5:15.

Juanita served us coffee at Yucca and set aside my supper for me. It was a quarter of 7 when they resumed their trek and so I was able to hear E. Roscoe Morrow from Berlin. I assume he may have been on the air last night, but I missed the program, although I cannot think why.

As for the Storm contingent, it was quite a caravan. They are traveling in some sort of a glorified station wago, with Kay on the front seat, la Storm on the back, and almost lost in mountains of duffle. To the car is attached the specially contrived canine trailer, so partitioned as to keep one dog in one section and two in the other. It seems that if permitted within range of each other, two of the dogs will fight to the death and so must be kept apart. Personally I can't imagine a household embracing such a situation but there's no accounting for taste, of course, and no possible way for a person with my limited imagination to think how anybody would put so much disagreeable impedimenta on one's back when heading out from the Atlantic for the Pacific. Since money can be no object, shipping at least one of the more aggressive dogs by express would seem to be one simple way of getting



1830

6295

rid of such inconvenience en route. But nothing seems too much trouble for their mistress and who am I to worry about her inconvenience. There was talking about wrappings of Turkish toweling which is to be saturated with water and drapped about the dogs during the prolonged jaunt across the desert where the heat at this season is said to be very trying for dogs. It's all very wonderful and something I should care to worry about.

I was glad the Guernsey lilies were at their brightest today, for the mass of coloring delighted both the ladies when they caught their first glimpse of it encircling the African House. A few crepe myrtles gave touches of color in other sections of the gardens and they loved the pale pink ones which are quite lovely. You asked the other day about the butterfly lily situation at the moment. It is excellent, and they will continue blossoming until some November frost .... puts them out of business.

They ladies asked me to come out to spend the winter with them, saying that the house is amply expansive so that there would be no crowding. I demurred, saying that I preferred to travel Eastward if at all. They tried to extract a promise that I would come to The Bluff sometime after next June with a view of remaining. They certainly are cordial and June seems pleasantly far away at the moment, and next June will be time enough to put it off for another June and another.

I saw Blythe Rand at the store this afternoon, along with Miss Pringle. I did not urge them to come in as I was thinking the clock was getting close to 3. Blythe said something about all of us coming to the camp next Sunday for dinner. I hope she saw J. H., for I don't want to make any dates for them, and I don't look forward to lingering long at the camp on Sundays, what with all the swirl of people around this place on the Sabbath.

I am under the impression that Blythe, of all people, is under the impression that there is nothing to do in the country, that people dwelling in rural retreats are dying for human companionship with city dwellers, and accordingly she is inclined to get the impression I am snubbing her when I don't appear at the camp whenever somebody puts in an appearance. She was in a less mellow mood today, and I didn't try to suggest that Sunday is among my busier days.

Well, so much for a memo of scant interest. Perhaps I shall do better on the morrow.....

1830

6296

Wednesday, Sept. 16th, 1953.

Memorandum:

The beautiful Indian Summer continues, with noon day in the 90's and midnight in the 60's, and it is all very pleasant.

Today was one of those short ones in the mail department. I suppose the in-coming sacks got shunted to Melville or Welcome or some such place.

Yesterday Celeste had a card from Pat, carrying a Pompei scene and saying he was at Naples momentarily on his vacation. I believe he plans to visit Egypt during the greater part of his 6 weeks or how ever long is leave is. But with his propensity for getting around fast, I suppose any place on the globe might fall within possibilities. And speaking of Pat, the clerk remarked that he supposed the reason, the real reason for J. H.'s trip to Europe in December was to persuade Pat to put off the marriage he had planned for Spring in Britain. It is said Pat never did get married although his girl friend did make the trans-Atlantic crossing at that time. I understand none of this but pass it along regardless.

Father Lyons who replaced Father Becker at Cloutierville, brought his sister of New York for a little tour this afternoon. I asked him how his business was perking and he said there was no more business in Cloutierville, meaning to convey the impression that the days are over when Father Becker operated the local mill, cotton gin and so on. I mentioned that a flock of religious and lay biddies had honored me one Sunday afternoon a month or two back, stopping off on their way to his Church. He said they came for a bingo and something else, I have forgotten what. Celeste told me the other day that bingo game netted Father Lyons eight hundred dollars, which may not be business, but doesn't seem bad for a couple of hours' frolic. But there are bound to be differences between the Becker and Lyons regimes, and one of the elements may be found, perhaps, in the fact that Father Becker got his by working everybody for his own profit while Father Lyons induces people to play to achieve for himself the same end. Personally, I am all on Father Lyons' side.



6297

6297

I hope you had the pleasure of hearing Mr. Stevenson out of Chicago last night. It is a pleasure to listen to the words of such a man.

And tonight you perhaps heard Mr. Borrow from Berlin when he seemed to snap at Alex Kendrick who, in response to the Morrow inquiry about coming "down to Berlin" remarked that he had "come up".

I am taking an occasional pass at Herr Trilling's collection of essays and find some of them entertaining and some exceedingly dull. There is one on a Wordsworth poem that seems so typical of the old time passion teachers used to have when they tried to force their students to find some deeply hidden meaning in every word and phrase, means, I have often felt, which would amaze the original writers of the lines. Once or twice in my life I have broken off correspondence with people who couldn't resist asking me why I used this or that word and prayed me to explain the subtle meaning I had intended to convey. Such correspondence never got very far beyond my recognition that the individual was obviously trying to "make mountains out of moth holes".

With all the talk going on at the moment about the shortage of schools and school teachers, I find myself wondering if that is really going to matter so much as the announcements imply. Out of the hundreds of teachers I have labored under,-- from kindergarten to graduate school, only two seem to remain in my memory as having been successful in accomplishing the purpose their position seemed to suggest was the reason for their being, and if today's new crop of pupils end up by having not more than 50 different accredited school teachers to their account, perhaps their chance to hit an average higher than mine is altogether possible.

And I'm bound to smile to myself when, on occasion, Celeste declares in public:

"F..... is the best teacher I ever had....."

and I'm inclined to believe her, especially as I must say she never learned a thing from my feeble efforts at killing time over the coffee cups.

Once in a while a letter on the negative side is inevitable, and this appears to be it. Forgive me. I shall try to better at some subsequent sitting.....

6298

6298

Thursday, September 17th, 1953.

Memorandum: Obviously I should have my head examined, for in spite of the million evidences that should fortify me against surprise at anything little Miss Ramsey might do, I was quite taken aback when today's air mail from her indicated she was blandly spending a couple of months in California.

I shall pen her a line tonight, quoting directly from an old plantation mistress of mutual acquaintance:

"Anything you do is alright but don't do it."

Carolyn is so prodigal in plans, so poor in performance. With her fingers in such a vast assortment of pies, perhaps the Law of Averages will entitle her to striking the jackpot eventually. As an oil prospector, however, she never would get to first base, if I may mix the metaphors, for although she might be drilling slap atop an oil dome, she never would stay with the thing long enough to contact the gusher under her feet. She is certainly a wonderfully gifted person but just as wacky as the same chicken with its hat off.

And so, having thus finished off Carolyn, let me take a pot shot at Dame Sally Hertzog of Magnolia. I do so because it demonstrates,--not the finishing off of, but the recital,--how unlikely one is able to judge reaction to one's efforts. I sent Father Lyons a plate of the Cane River Country, thinking he might like it for his rectory and immediately I received a generous expression of his appreciation. At the same time, however, I was advised on unquestioned authority that Miss Sally had not been at all pleased with the Melrose Plantation plate I sent her on its release. As you know, the Melrose Plantation plate was rolled in the direction of Miss Cammie's friends, as a kind of souvenir of that lady. But Miss Sally immediately gave the one I sent her to the first person passing her way who would accept it. And whenever the plates in the Cane River series are

And just to think one has to be born in the South



6299

mentioned in her presence, she invariably explains:

"If anyone wants the Melrose Plantation plate in his house, it's his business but as for me, I simply couldn't think of having any plate or picture under my roof that included the likeness of a colored person in it."

And so the Park Commission wanted me to hang jalouses on Oakley and Miss Sally would have me eliminate all people of color from the compositions, thereby proving again what he so often been pointed out before, - if one begins whittling at his contrivances to suit the whims of every passer-by, he will end up by whittling the thing into utter oblivion.

Before folding up my beard tonight, I am bound to pass along the Hertzog stand on the Melrose Plantation plate to Dora. Somehow I have a feeling it ought to fit in ever so neatly with Dora's collection that includes the Meridastreak of cool air seems to be "hoovering" around somewhere but not in this immediate vicinity, but within a sufficient number of hundreds of miles to convulse the radio. Thus I got but a garbled news report that seemed to come from Meridian, Mississippi, although I made the news, however, was the fact that some white person was arrested and let out on five hundred dollar bail while a person of color was taken in as a witness and held in jail. But, marvelous to relate, some local citizen found this to be outrageous and took up a collection forthwith, so that the witness might at least have the freedom the culprit was enjoying. I couldn't make out if those who took up the collection were colored or white, but one can deduce easily enough, correctly or incorrectly.

to understand colored people

And in pursuance of things Meridian, Ora told me the other day that her servant, -- a descendant of Grandpere, mentioned as a matter of course that when people of color, -- the Metoyers are of very light hue, -- when the youths of that race are driving home to Louisiana by car and find Mississippi stretching across their path, they have long since learned that it is well to fill up their gas tank before crossing the Mississippi State line; for usually they find the gas stations will not sell their commodity to a people of color. It seems such a pity that poor Miss Sally has to live in such a cultural exile as is provided by Louisiana when she would feel so much more at home if she could only have for neighbors such residents as those who dwell in Meridian of Jackson.

*And just to think one has to be born in the South*

6300

Friday, September 18th, 1953.

**Memorandum:** How nice to find your Monday letter in today's post.

The peace I had hoped might be yours didn't seem to matter to me but I find myself holding the same wave length for the next ensuing couple of days. At least it is good to know that those in more or less frantic pursuit of education, -- oh, is it a game, -- have reached their appointed places, and may they continue to "stay put" for ever so many weeks hence. I think it was so nice having the surprise from the youth and the orchid in silver filigree will be doubly appreciated in view of its source.

I can well imagine how you may have begrudged the time taken away from la Roundtree in order to observe new fangled sofa beds and T V sets. I guess it is well the newly weds have the T V contraption, for the view from their bedroom window certainly holds nothing in the line of enchantment by way of a view.

Today's sky was leaden gray, the color one expects to encounter in late November when the rainy season gets under way. But in spite of the coverage, the thermometer remained in the upper 90's. The promise is for rain on Saturday, I hope, for that will mean cooler weather and last night's low of 76 made sleeping but fitful.

I can't remember why my morning was so busy but I didn't get around to tearing my house to pieces for a thorough going over until 1:30 in the afternoon. I never have discovered when a safe hour might be hit upon that would give some hope of enabling one to crawl out from under the furniture before pilgrims appear.

In the midst of my domestic confusion, two gentlemen knocked at my door. I glanced in that direction and in a somewhat stentorian tone, indicated my lack of enthusiasm by repeating, "No...no...no...no...!"

But when they announced themselves as Teaward and Fletcher,  
one presenting ~~us~~ me with a bottle of sherry, the other a



0000

6301

huge package of cheese, I bid them leap the impedimenta  
and collapse in the living room. I think you have  
seen a recent letter from Lionel Jeanmard who is a  
nice person. Dr. Joel Fletcher you will recall is  
President of Southwestern at Lafayette.

Dr. Fletcher had remarked within the Jeanmard hearing  
the other day that he would like to make a quick round up  
this way and so they cooked up the jaunt over night, with  
a view to visiting momentarily at Briarwood, stopping for  
luncheon in town and then dropping down here to see me.

Dr. Fletcher wanted to make an appointment for a  
conference in October as he has some educational ideas which  
he wants to discuss with somebody and I seemed to be the  
only one he could think of at the moment. We accordingly  
arranged for a meeting later by four weeks or thereabouts,  
and I shall be glad to hear what new wrinkles are being  
mullied over by the educators.

Dr. Fletcher said they got a strange reception at  
Briarwood which they reached at noon. They pounded on  
the front door and on the windows but got no response.  
With la Storm probably having pulled out yesterday, perhaps  
Carolyn thought the bill collectors might be upon her and  
didn't relish cashing any check she may have received.  
Whatever the reason for their failure to get a response,  
the fact remains that they finally tried the back door which  
opened readily enough enabling them to place inside the house  
the package of food stuffs they had brought the gals. They  
were somewhat taken aback when they discovered Caroline peeping  
at them through a chink in the wall, and when they saw  
her, she apparently then recognized them, and came out.  
"Ole" Virginia was asleep and so they did not chat with  
her although they passed the open door in the house where she  
was reposing. Perhaps Caroline was getting caught up on  
her sleep, following her entertaining of the Storm contingent.  
Dr. Fletcher told me he understood the Leutcher-Starks had recen  
advanced a thousand dollars against prospective iris painting,  
so the gals must be momentarily in the money.

I thought of my old dog when the radio mentioned a cur  
today, but it turned out the spoken word probably referred not  
to a cur but a Kerr, reportedly engaged to Senator McCarthy.  
What a heritage for the offspring of such a union. Can't  
you picture a noisy collage youth proclaiming that  
on his mother's side he descended from a cur and on his  
father's from an S.O.B.

I'm so happy to have your Monday letter to make  
my week end the happier. Here's hoping yours may be  
an all quizz one....

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6302

Looking back today at the day of the "goat" I am reminded of the  
enjoyment of the participants in the "goat" and the  
pleasure of the "goat" and the pleasure of the "goat".  
Sunday, September 20th, 1953.

Memorandum:  
The day was cloudless and the warmth was tempered by a  
slight breeze under the big cedar when J. H., Celeste and I  
went over to the camp to dine on goat with the Rands and their  
other guests. It was a fairly small party and altogether  
pleasant. And to goat didn't taste like goat, which was excellent  
that reason. I need not remind you of the type of dinner the  
Rands are wont to serve, and it was all that. The substitute  
for plates were sectional trays and I ate two sections of a  
delicious shrimp salad and one section of avocado salad,  
not to mention fresh biscuits and fresh toast, both smothered  
in pimento cheese, run through the oven. Melon started off  
the business and there were endless side dishes, preserves,  
jellies and the Lord knows what all, while the desert was something  
marvelous by way of a huge gob of chiffon cake, drowned in some kind  
of a delectable sauce, savoring of sweets, nut meg and  
peaches, the latter apparently tossed in just to fill up  
the expansive bowls.

The fare sustained me for the tiresome pilgrims I  
found awaiting me on my return.  
J. H. took Dr. Rand, Gordon Randolph and one or two other  
men to look over the plantation pecanaw somewhere on the  
back of the plantation, and I descended at the front gate.  
Celeste remained at the camp, and so I imagine everyone did  
about as he pleased.

If I can find the letter from the Hughes of Little Rock,  
I shall enclose it. You will like the message it contains  
from Caroline. As I haven't heard from her in the Lord  
knows when, I find it pretty funny that she should say I was  
the one who owed her a letter and not the other way around,  
although I must say she was perfectly right when she added that  
I ought to know her better than to count letters with  
her, she might have said from her, since there would be  
none to count.

.....



6303

6303

If you heard today's discussion of "Alice Through the Looking Glass", you were probably as exhilarated as I by the enthusiasm of the enthusiasts of the participants around the table. I was wonderfully impressed by the fact that I could work up so much delight at the obvious pleasure this book affords others while at the same time, the speakers succeeded not at all in selling me the Carroll opus.

I was interested in the fact that, as they pointed out, the story was based on the chess board with the various characters being represented by the various chessmen used in playing the game and that Alice herself made her progression across the squares until by arriving at the far end of the board, she, herself, became a Queen.

If I remember correctly, the book was written in the 1860's or 1870's, ostensibly for the entertainment of a real little girl. I have no idea if English children in the 1860's were familiar with chess. As for myself, I knew mighty lit about the game until I was at least ten years older than Alice was when the book was stirred up for her delectation. I don't know if some knowledge of the rudiments of chess is necessary for one to comprehend the drift of the tale, but if so, that may be one reason why I failed to re-act with enthusiasm, since I had no notion of the frame work on which the thing was built. I noticed, too, with what enthusiasm Helen McInness spoke of the Teniel illustrations. To me they rank along side the illustrations used in some of the early Dickens novels from the pen of Cruikshank. They frightened me as a child and to this day they continue to afford me no pleasure. Today's broad cast was a shining example of the splendid artistry of Dr. Bryson and company for any group of actors who can fascinate an audience, completely indifferent to the piece being played out is truly remarkable.

I notice they are going to give Caesar's Commentaries a going over next Sunday. I hope I may hear that session. When in my early scholastic career, I took it into my head to make a round of several of the camps Caesar described in some details in his Commentaries. The one I liked best was situated at Melun which, for me, had the particular advantage of being but a few miles from Vaux-le-Vicomte and Vaux-Parslin and only a few miles to the North of Fontainebleau. Certainly I never had the slightest interest in anybody's military tactics and perhaps I liked visiting the sites of Caesar's camps primarily because so many centuries of interesting things had revolved about their neighbor. Perhaps I had already read the Fitzgerald rendition of Omar Khyam and was turing over in my mind that line: "I sometime think that never blows so red, the rose was where some Caesar bled...."

6304

6304

Monday, September 21st, 1953.  
Memorandum:  
I have no doubt the original letter from Rock Hall came to your true hand, but I enclose the duplicate received today, just to make sure that the "Mr." didn't get the envelope into the wrong box.

And above all, I find myself hoping that you didn't exhaust yourself, flying up and down 42nd Street, for the plates themselves will not be shipped before this week, and I have been waiting for the African House plates, recently re-ordered, for the past three weeks. Perhaps, although shipped weeks apart, both items will arrive at the same time.

Andy came to see me this evening. He said Orellia had gone to visit her auntie who lives somewhere in the environs of Monroe, a couple of weeks back. This was the first time she had ever been away from the Cane River country and on Saturday he had received a letter from her, saying she was going to surprise them. The surprise came on Sunday morning before sun up when she arrived with a truck, swept out the house, pushed Bessie and the two children into the cab with the driver, and headed off for Monroe, --and for oblivion, I fear, so far as ever dwelling in this region again. The girl has always interested me because of the transparency of her personality or rather her motives. Her courage and strong will has carried her family over so many difficult shoals that it is but natural she should have swept everything before her when finally she decided it was time for Bessie and the children to depart from the only place they have ever known as home, --and what a shambles that has always been. They left Andy his little bed, one straight back chair, one pot in which he could make coffee and an old stove. It would have been a pitiful situation for Andy had not his father and brother and sister been living just below the spillway, and I believe he is going to stay with them.

The simplicity of his mind is somewhat like Aurellias, for when some one asked him why he, too, didn't go to Monroe with his sisters, he said that he wanted to stay here because whenever



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When we were all together again, I asked Sister Johanna to draw a slip from a vase in which I had put the duplicate numbers. The children loved all that business and when No. 22 was announced, a youth of 14 or 15 announced that it was his number, whereupon he was presented with a plate of the Cane River Country, which he left upopened, as proud as a peacock. Oddly enough the winner was Eric Cloutier, son of Mr. and Mrs. Guy Cloutier, a nephew of Beth and Vernon, and grandson of the lady who lives at Oaklawn, -- the new name of the plantation which appears as Cashmere on the plate he won.

A great many people in Hatchitoches, Protestant as well as Catholic, send their children to the Convent where the instruction, both in scholastic and manners, rates high, and I suppose plenty of religious stuff gets spilled out, too. The children were on their best behavior and on leaving one or two of them said they wished they could come back and study some more history, -- and try for a lucky number, too, it was all so much fun.

At supper J. H. did much talking about yesterday's frolic under the cedar and said he found the desert the best of all, which sounds odd enough since the Madam always was priding herself that her children never liked sweets. The lady doctor was to receive a civic award over the air this evening, but I was busy with people and so missed it, which I regret. And so things turn, and so I must fold.....

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Tuesday, September 22nd, 1953.

Memorandum: How nice to find your letter and the Whitney-Wailes transcript in today's post.

I am so glad to have this copy which I am putting with the manuscript, and, in response to your inquiry, may I recommend that you keep the papers from which the manuscript was made for "us-es" file. It is such a comfort to know they are in such capable hands and unless I mention the return of anything, always feel free to dispose of them in any way that suits your own good judgement.

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Little King came to see me this morning. He said he had decided to re-enlist for 6 years and is planning to leave tomorrow. He will re-join the Army by enlisting at Camp Polk which, as you know, is about 40 or 50 miles westward from here, over the hills beyond Gorham, --a God forsaken country it seems to me but perhaps the better in view of the purpose camps are designed. The advantage for Little King is the fact that with his new car, acquired following the wreck, he can spend his week ends in this area so long as he remains at Polk.

He said he had come to see me because he wanted one or two of his old acquaintances to come to dinner on his last night at home and that Zelma was cooking up something he thought I would like. I was delighted to accept his invitation, of course, and shall touch on a couple of details on the morrow. Even as you, so are we beginning to feel autumn in the air, --58 last night, --and I so like the summer, too.

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Wednesday, September 23rd, 1953.

Memorandum: How nice to find your letter of Friday in today's post, and may I thank you, too, for having sent me the notation regarding Nina's letter.

I am glad the sketch reached you alright and that you like the Joyous Coast design. I certainly hope you haven't rushed about too exhaustingly in quest of the photographer. Whenever I think of all the prolonged period you have been through with Southerners from way down-cluttering up your routine, --and smashing it, I feel shame-faced enough at the thought of contributing further to upsetting the usual pattern of your days.

I must inquire of J. H. as to how his mail is running these days. Obviously there must be something out of joint with the air services that take from Friday until Wednesday to get a letter from there to here. It is good to know that the Monday memo from here reached you in five days by regular poney express. That is what makes it seem so odd that it takes a day longer for deliveries sent by jet. The slow up in delivery is caused by carelessness in this area, I imagine, with Welcome and Melville coming to find whenever delays are especially noticeable.

A letter from Briarwood...poor Caroline....I ought to be feeling sorry for her but it seems to take quite a lot of priming of the heart pump to get a grackle started....and I am frankly ashamed of myself. As a sample of my meanness of soul, I find myself saying that people suffering from writer's cramp can usually somehow find time to write when they want something. What Caroline wants is to see the Kleisers whom she must have heard were planning to come to Melrose in September. As you know, the Kleisers dwell on the Leutcher-Stark estate and the Kleisers have quite a bit of influence with the Leutcher-Starks in matters of iris-painting and so on. Although Caroline can't understand why the Kleisers have never gone to Briarwood may quite possible be do to the fact that they are always as busy as bees at their painting when in this area, but Kleiser industry would never be comprehensible at Briarwood. I shall of course give



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mentioned in her presence, she invariably explains:

"If anyone wants the Melrose Plantation plate in his house, it's his business but as for me, I simply couldn't think of having any plate or picture under my roof that included the likeness of a colored person in it."

And so the Park Commission wanted me to hang jalouses on Oakley and Miss Sally would have me eliminate all people of color from the compositions, thereby proving again what he so often been pointed out before, - if one begins whittling down his contrivances to suit the whims of every passer-by, he will end up by whittling the thing into utter oblivion.

Before folding up my beard tonight, I am bound to pass along the Hertzog stand on the Melrose Plantation plate to Dora. Somehow I have a feeling it ought to fit in ever so neatly with Dora's collection that includes the Meridian tree of cool air seems to be "hoovering" around somewhere but not in this immediate vicinity, but within a sufficient number of hundreds of miles to convulse the radio. Thus I got but a garbled news report that seemed to come from Meridian, Mississippi, although I am a might uncertain about the whole thing. The thing that made the news, however, was the fact that some white person was arrested and let out on five hundred dollar bail while a person of color was taken in as a witness and held in jail. But, marvelous to relate, some local citizens found this to be outrageous and took up a collection forthwith, so that the witness might at least have the freedom the culprit was enjoying. I couldn't make out if those who took up the collection were colored or white, but one can deduce easily enough, correctly or incorrectly.

to understand color  
And in pursuance of things Meridian, Ora told me the other day that her servant, -- a descendant of Grandpere, mentioned as a matter of course that when people of color, -- the Metoyers are of very light hue; -- when the youths of that race are driving home to Louisiana by car and find Mississippi stretching across their path, they have long since learned that it is well to fill up their gas tank before crossing the Mississippi State line, for usually they find the gas stations will not sell their commodity to a people of color. It seems such a pity that poor Miss Sally has to live in such a cultural exile as is provided by Louisiana when she would feel so much more at home if she could only have for neighbors such residents as those who dwell in Meridian of Jackson.

*And just to think one has to be born in the South*

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Friday, September 18th, 1953.

**Memorandum:** How nice to find your Monday letter in today's post.

The peace I had hoped might be yours didn't seem to matter to me, but I find myself holding the same wave length for the next ensuing couple of days. At least it is good to know that those in more or less frantic pursuit of education, -- as it is a game, -- have reached their appointed places, and may they continue to "stay put" for ever so many weeks hence. I think it was so nice having the surprise from the youth and the orchid in silver filigree will be doubly appreciated in view of its source.

I can well imagine how you may have begrudged the time taken away from la Roundtree in order to observe new fangled sofa beds and T V sets. I guess it is well the newly weds have the T V contraption, for the view from their bedroom window certainly holds nothing in the line of enchantment by way of a view.

Today's sky was leaden gray, the color one expects to encounter in late November when the rainy season gets under way. But in spite of the coverage, the thermometer remained in the upper 90's. The promise is for rain on Saturday, I hope, for that will mean cooler weather and last night's low of 76 made sleeping but fitful.

I can't remember why my morning was so busy but I didn't get around to tear my house to pieces for a thorough going over until 1:30 in the afternoon. I never have discovered when a safe hour might be hit upon that would give some hope of enabling one to crawl out from under the furniture before pilgrims appear.

In the midst of my domestic confusion, two gentlemen knocked at my door. I glanced in that direction and in a somewhat stentorian tone, indicated my lack of enthusiasm by repeating, "No...no...no...no..."

But when they announced themselves as Jeamard and Fletcher,  
one presenting ~~me~~ me with a bottle of sherry, the other a



huge package of cheese, I bid them leap the impedimenta and collapse in the living room. I think you have seen a recent letter from Lionel Jeanmard who is a nice person. Dr. Joel Fletcher you will recall is President of Southwestern at Lafayette.

Dr. Fletcher had remarked within the Jeanmard hearing the other day that he would like to make a quick round up this way and so they cooked up the jaunt over night, with a view to visiting momentarily at Briarwood, stopping for luncheon in town and then dropping down here to see me.

Dr. Fletcher wanted to make an appointment for a conference in October as he has some educational ideas which he wants to discuss with somebody and I seemed to be the only one he could think of at the moment. We accordingly arranged for a meeting later by four weeks or thereabouts, and I shall be glad to hear what new wrinkles are being mulled over by the educators.

Dr. Fletcher said they got a strange reception at Briarwood which they reached at noon. They pounded on the front door and on the windows but got no response. With a storm probably having pulled out yesterday, perhaps Carolyn thought the bill collectors might be upon her and didn't relish cashing any check she may have received. Whatever the reason for their failure to get a response, the fact remains that she finally tried the back door which opened readily enough enabling them to place inside the house the package of food stuffs they had brought the gals. They were somewhat taken aback when they discovered Caroline peeping at them through a chink in the wall, and when they saw her, she apparently then recognized them, and came out.

"Ole" Virgintie was asleep and so they did not chat with her although they passed the open door in the house where she was reposing. Perhaps Caroline was getting caught up on her sleep, following her entertaining of the Storm contingent. Dr. Fletcher told me she understood the Leutcher-Starks had recently advanced a thousand dollars against prospective iris painting, so the gals must be momentarily in the money.

I thought of my old dog when the radio mentioned a cur today, but it turned out the spoken word probably referred not to a cur but a Kerr, reportedly engaged to Senator McCarthy. What a heritage for the offspring of such a union. Can't you picture a noisy college youth proclaiming that on his mother's side he descended from a cur and on his father's from an S. O. B."

I'm so happy to have your Monday letter to make my week end the happier. Here's hoping yours may be an all quizz one....

Sunday, September 20th, 1953.

**Memorandum:** The day was cloudless and the warmth was tempered by a slight breeze under the big cedar when J. H., Celeste and I went over to the camp to dine on goat with the Rands and their other guests. It was a fairly small party and altogether pleasant. And to goat didn't taste like goat, which was excellent that reason. I need not remind you of the type of dinner the Rands are want to serve, and it was all that. The substitute for plates were sectional trays and I ate two sections of a delicious shrimp salad and one section of avocado salad, not to mention fresh biscuits and fresh toast, both smothered in pemento cheese, run through the oven. Melon started off the business and there were endless side dishes, preserves, jellies and the Lord knows what all, while the desert was something marvelous by way of a huge gob of chiffon cake, drowned in some kind of a delectable sauce, savoring of sweets, nut meg and peaches, the latter apparently tossed in just to fill up the expansive bowls.

The fare sustained me for the tiresome pilgrims I found awaiting me on my return.

J. H. took Dr. Rand, Gordon Randolph and one or two other men to look over the plantation pecaness somewhere on the back of the plantation, and I descended at the front gate. Celeste remained at the camp, and so I imagine everyone did about as he pleased.

If I can find the letter from the Hughes of Little Rock, I shall enclose it. You will like the message it contains from Caroline. As I haven't heard from her in the Lord knows when, I find it pretty funny that she should say I was the one who owed her a letter and not the other way around, although I must say she was perfectly right when she added that I ought to know her better than to count letters with her, -- she might have said from her, since there would be none to count.



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If you heard today's discussion of "Alice Through the Looking Glass", you were probably as exhilarated as I by the enthusiasm of the enthusiasts of the participants around the table. I was wonderfully impressed by the fact that I could work up so much delight at the obvious pleasure this book affords others while at the same time, the speakers succeeded not at all in selling me the Carroll opus.

I was interested in the fact that, as they pointed out, the story was based on the chess board with the various characters being represented by the various chessmen used in playing the game and that Alice herself made her progression across the squares until by arriving at the far end of the board, she, herself, became a Queen.

If I remember correctly, the book was written in the 1860's or 1870's, ostensibly for the entertainment of a real little girl. I have no idea if English children in the 1860's were familiar with chess. As for myself, I knew mighty lit about the game until I was at least ten years older than Alice was when the book was stirred up for her delectation. I don't know if some knowledge of the rudiments of chess is necessary for one to comprehend the drift of the tale, but if so, that may be one reason why I failed to re-act with enthusiasm, since I had no notion of the frame work on which the thing was built. I noticed, too, with what enthusiasm Helen McInness spoke of the Teniel illustrations. To me they rank along side the illustrations used in some of the early Dickens novels from the pen of Cruikshank. They frightened me as a child and to this day they continue to afford me no pleasure. Today's broad cast was a shining example of the splendid artistry of Dr. Bryson and company for any group of actors who can fascinate an audience, completely indifferent to the piece being played out is truly remarkable.

I notice they are going to give Caesar's Commentaries a going over next Sunday. I hope I may hear that session. When in my early scholastic career, I took it into my head to make a round of several of the camps Caesar described in some details in his Commentaries. The one I liked best was situated at Melun which, for me, had the particular advantage of being but a few miles from Vaux-le-Vicomte and Vaux-Parslin and only a few miles to the North of Fontainebleau. Certainly I never had the slightest interest in anybody's military tactics and perhaps I liked visiting the sites of Caesar's camps primarily because so many centuries of interesting things had revolved about their neighborh. Perhaps I had already read the Fitzgerald rendition of Omar Khyam and was turing over in my mind that line: "I sometime think that never blows so red, the rose was where some Caesar bled...."

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Monday, September 21st, 1953.  
Memorandum:  
I have no doubt the original letter from Rock Hall came to your true hand, but I enclose the duplicate received today, just to make sure that the "Mr." didn't get the envelope into the wrong box.

And above all, I find myself hoping that you didn't exhaust yourself, flying up and down 42nd Street, for the plates themselves will not be shipped before this week, and I have been waiting for the African House plates, recently re-ordered, for the past three weeks. Perhaps, although shipped weeks apart, both items will arrive at the same time.

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Wednesday, September 23rd, 1958.

them her message and shall urge them to try to find their way up there. They have seen her more frequently than I have in recent years, I think, for they have mentioned her as being at the Leutcher-Starks now and then. Briarwood, to my way of thinking is a rural paradise for the woodsey botani but since neither of the Kleisers are in the latter category, I can well imagine why they have never taken time out from their Cane River painting to g high their hips into what Dr. Benjamin Chase described as The Wilderness.

As for the balance of Caroline's letter, what she touches on is scarcely more interesting than what she side-stepped and forgot to mention, --the visit of la Storm, the unacknowledged Christmas gift and so on.

Because of so much trivia included in yesterday's memo, I put off a brief account of the going-away party for Little King. It was at Puny's, hard by the Rand Camp, and the full moon made a lovely world out of the cotton fields as I journeyed in that direction, toasting a couple of bottles of wine and an angel food cake which Ora had brought me in the afternoon. For clarity's sake, it occurs to me I might say the wine was not of a Williams vintage.

It had been too long since I had been to a party for I discovered the pleasure of surprise I again experienced at bumping into local customs, as for example, all the gentlemen congregating in one room, the ladies in another. It was a small party, including Little King, Puny, the Dark Duke, Pierre, Ezra, Lee, Clyde Claude Emmett Davis, Kirt Hachette, little Willie Hachette Fugabou and three or four others. A couple of rounds of drinks, served by Little King, made the rounds, with much chatter and laughter accompanying same. After that we passed through three rooms to the back of the house, where in the kitchen the ladies, including Zelma, Ezra's wife, Little King's wife and so on presided over the plates which had already been fortified with vegetables, fried chicken, potato salade, etc., awaited the on-coming gentlemen, who, taking up their plates, amid pleasantries with the ladies, marched back to the place of origin where all the gentlemen ate with gusto and merriment. It was all very pleasant and I think Little King departed today with happy memories of his last evening at home.

6310

Thursday, September 24th, 1953.

and that is of tremendous help, for I shall take particular pains to see that the spelling in Weston's name whenever used in publicity blurb, will be correct. It is quite possible that the error may not be noticed by the average purchaser of the plate, and since the Prudhommes will be the majority of these investors and because none of them will be the slightest notion as to how Weston did spell his name, the thing

**Memorandum:**

How nice to find your Saturday letter in today's post.

By good fortune, a secretary passed this way this noon, giving me an opportunity to run through it at 12:30. It is among the nicer letters I know and naturally when another secretary came at 5:15, I enjoyed it all over again. How may I begin to say how much I appreciate every word.

It is so pleasant thinking of you established in the boudoir with the new "outfit". Surely that was a wonderful present and one which you are going to enjoy endlessly. I am so happy both for yourself and for me, for, I think you will agree, that there are few pleasures quite so exquisite as having some notion of the surroundings in which one quite close in spirit finds him or herself, with the realization that there is this or that object close to hand which is going to afford endless pleasure. Somehow all during the long hot summer, for instance, I have a feeling that your evenings, too, were a bit more happy in the realization that sitting along side Lestan was the ice bucket that guaranteed refreshment in the Tender Leaf department when the Reading Machine got turned on and vague thoughts could travel unrestrained. Somehow I feel like that about the new machine and may its delights even exceed our expectations.

K'm glad you liked the voice of your name sake. I thought it had a clarity that might please you and the fact that some of the songs were sung in a tongue familiar to you might add a certain flavor.

And may I thank you for telling me your impressions of the new Joyous Coast design. I am so glad you like it and I thank you sincerely for having acquainted me with the somewhat odd spelling of Lestan. It seems mighty curious that I should not have caught the error and yet, knowing as we both do, on what uncertain lights we sometimes operate, I suppose it isn't surprising that a greater measure of perfection is attained. I asked three people to check the script with me, --the clerk, Celeste and the least inefficient secretary, Helen. I had each word spelled out three times through this medium, and each numeral repeated, --and yet.... But thanks to you



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intelligence, I am acquainted with the exact situation, and that is of tremendous help, for I shall take particular pains to see that the spelling in Lestan's name whenever used in publicity blurbs, will be correct. It is quite possible that the error may not be noticed by the average purchaser of the plate, and since the Prudhommes will be the majority of these investors and because none of them probably have the slightest notion as to how Lestan did spell his name, the thing may slide by for them, even as it did for Celeste and all.

A d may I think you for telling me about your bird's eye view of the Crown Prince of Japan and about some of his recent schedule. Some time back I had heard, --and was delighted, --that when he went to Philadelphia, he would visit Mrs. Vining. (How wonderful that you should have recalled I read "Windows for the Crown Prince.") ut that was all I heard and so I did not ~~be~~ learned if he had contacted his old teacher. How pleasant to know all that has been effected. I had heard no mention of the trip the teacher and pupil had made the pilgrimage to Hyde Park, and, as you know, that news was bound to delight me. How indebted I am to you for sharing all this with me.

And may I thank you for having been so thoughtful as to send the pages from the Times Magazine Section with your suggestion regarding an announcement of pecanese to be inserted. I took up the matter with J. H. at supper tonight and he thought the idea a splendid one and is writing the Times tonight relative to the matter. It is so wonderful of you to interest yourself in so many things that perk in so many different places.

You sk about the use of the pastille burner. That was a phrase used in the 18th century especially, when one referred to incense burners by that name, and this was for the drawingroom or my lady's boudoir.

Arenbourg's crepe myrtles bloomed three times in succession this year, as Crepe myrtles are wont to do if the first and second bursts of blossoms are cut off as soon as the flowering of each round is completed. One or two persimmons escaped me earlier in the summer and they are beginning to take on a lovely orange tint. I am letting lots of weeds grow in advantageous places to discourage trespassers but the "children" are given adequate breathing space and are thriving mightily.

Mrs. Wood came to paint this afternoon. There were California pilgrims and later Blythe and Mary Pringle came for a little visit. Between secretaries, the day was a busy one, but thanks to your grand letter, it has been among the happier days.....

0183

6312

Friday, September 25th, 1953.

Memorandum:

I suppose those ladies from South Carolina, finally established in Hollywood, must be listening to the radio to follow the course of the hurricane boiling up in a hundred and twenty mile twister tonight.

The local weather reports last night spoke of winds of 30 miles an hour today, and the march of time proved the forecast correct. But the skies remain cloudless and the thermometer in the upper 80's, with a promise of the 90's for tomorrow, --without clouds. And so the hurricane, if it keeps its present course, will strike shore between Mobile and Pensacola and probably push things around across Georgia, passing out into the Atlantic, --who knows where, -- but I hope not just over Moncks Corner.

It was good to hear E. Roscoe Morrow Wednesday night but I missed him last night through no fault of his. On his initial performance for an entire 15 minutes on Wednesday, it seemed to me he bore down a little more heavily on the Administration than heretofore, especially as regards the promises of liberation to the satellite countries when obviously nothing has been done and little or nothing can be by way of direct aid. How thoroughly I agreed with you regarding the excellence of the Stevenson speech of last week. As time jogs along, it seems to become more and more evident that Mr. Eisenhower, obviously a man of sterling quality, believes in letting the big shots determine policy in economic matters and hesitates to put forth direct leadership in matters of foreign concern. Whatever the big boys of the Republican Party want to legislate for their own benefit, they had better attend to in the January session of Congress, for unless things take a right about face, the Congressional elections will most certainly go in such a way that a Democratic majority will be in control, so far as the Legislative branch of the Government is concerned. --Perhaps Senator Wayne Morse hit off public impressions best when he spoke of the situation as being one of "country club versus the country".



6313

6313

Friday, September 25th, 1953

But before going off the track on the political front, I wanted to remark on the news concerning the mountain going to Mohamet in the case of the great hejira to Stamford. I don't know as it is a bit odd, and yet one so often thinks of the great metropolitan area serving to act as a magnet in drawing suburban peoples to it every day and thus with the process reversed, and people going from the urban axis sufficiently far into the country as to cross a State line does sound like a different tune I used to know the neighborhood quite well both in summer and winter and found its environs delicious in summer and remarkably snowy in winter. And just to think that I can remember when, say, Greenwich, Connecticut, was as far out in the country as 125th Street was remote from New York in Washington's time. Now I suppose Greenwich is just another Bronx and will probably have a subway running there before we know it.

It was good of you to speak of your girl friend, now journeying daily in the direction of Stamford. Of course I remember her name full well and how indebted I shall always be to her for the good offices she filled at a time when she could do so much to facilitate things.

I suppose it was the mention of her mother that reminded me of Nadine and filled me with wonder as to what has happened to her pattern of life, if she ever married and so. And of course I often think of Egon and hope he is making it alright. It seems to me that without half trying, I can envision him gesticulating with vehemence when the name of the obnoxious Senator from Wisconsin come up for air. Egon will always remain in my memory as one of the nicest people I ever knew and should I bump into him a thousand years hence, have a feeling we would readily pick up the thread of conversation without any necessity for filling in any of the gap between personal contacts. Both Dora and Ego are possessed of a soundness of heart, I think, that will forever make them unique as members of the human family.

On the lighter side of life, you will get a kick out of this news: --being nuts about the clergy, Miss Sally learned of Father Lyon's enthusiasm for the Cane River item, and is now angling for a plate. Well, she can angle for a while, don't you think so.....

6314

6314

Sunday, September 27th, 1953.

Memorandum:

The joke was on me: --

On Saturday, thinking it was time for cooler weather, I put a wool tack on my bed and today the thermometer soared to 100.

In anticipation of the arrival of the Joyous Coast plates, I thought I would do well to make room for the cartons and as the palette of wool was in my way, I figured the simplest way to eliminate it was to put it back on the bed, which shows what good judgement I used. Well, at least I accomplished my original purpose but I might as well confess that my gay ice bucket is gracing the tip top table along side my desk, and I intend responding to an urge for Good Tender Leaf tonight before flattening myself out on the wool mattress.

Breezes from the outer edge of the hurricane Florence, I suppose, played delightfully among the banana leaves all day Saturday but contrary to predictions, there weren't any clouds, and when the storm hit Panama City, it must have kept all the rains near the center and today not a leaf stirred in this Waylonke weather so fine, there were lots of people to get into the big road and into my hair. This week end's batch turned out to be exceedingly dumb.

What with dancing in the streets of New Iberia, I had supposed the master might be expected to find himself engaged in extra marital matters in the Hill Street neighborhood, but I was wrong. He, Dan and I had dinner at his house today, after which they departed for I know not where. Along about 4:30 or 5 this afternoon, I was quite unprepared for the appearance of Madame de Montespan's daughter on my gallery. She said her mama was at the front gate. She had brought me a bottle of berry cup wine and asked if she might walk in the garden a bit. I told her I would give



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her a personally contacted tour, adding the lie that we couldn't get far from the front gate as I had an appointment with pilgrims for 5 o'clock. Five minutes later, as though to confirm my falsehood, a car halted at the front gate. I explained that they were not the people with whom I had an appointment but that I wished to get rid of these unexpected new-comers and so would hand her back to her car, which I did. I certainly want to discourage visits from that quarter in view of the potentials in dynamite which might explode on days when there isn't any dancing in the streets of New Iberia, and naturally I don't want to contribute to any great waltzes getting under way on, say, the Melrose cattle gap in front of the residence across the fence.

I hope you heard the Bryson account of Caesar's Commentaries. I thought his gaiety with John Mason Brown on the subject of Latin was exhilarating.

Today I have written six letters to various people, handy with the camera, asking them about taking a snapshot that with the single click of the camera, would sum up much of what has happened in the South since 1800 and the days of Eli Whitney until now. Having in mind what Michel Ange did with the hand of God in the Sistine Chapel mural and what one or two Renaissance painters did with the hand of an angel in bringing tidings to Mary, I have suggested that something wonderful could be set forth in a camera study of an ebony hand, the fingers of which are about to clasp a snowy cotton boll. What do you think about such a study. My idea would be that the background should be the vaguest sort of leaf and twig pattern, --plain gray being enlivened ever so slightly by the faint suggestion of cotton leaves and a couple of twigs. Immediately in the foreground would be the hand of a negro, perhaps in vertical position, the fingers open but on the point of closing about the fleecy lint. The whole composition should have a velvety feeling, -- the gray background seemingly velvet in depth and the dark hand and the white boll of equally velvety value. I should like an enlargement at least a foot square where I could glance at it daily, for I have a feeling it ought to epitomize the whole Southern business in one single shot. I hope some one of the people to whom I have written may get a try at it during the current cotton season.

The enclosure was an unexpected pleasure, for this is the first I had learned that Daisey in the Dell was in the big road. Perhaps she will give us a travel letter on her return to Dallas, I hope, although she is not strong on travel books. We shall eventually see.....

1183

6316

Monday, September 28th, 1953.

**Memorandum:** Surely it must fill one with a vast sense of satisfaction to know one has offered a gift which has afforded so much pleasure as your ice bucket has to me during the current season.

The Weather Bureau talks about all heat records being broken for this late in the year and I can readily believe it. Today the local thermometer touched 105 and it doesn't seem to be cooling off much tonight. Perhaps I had better skip all reference to the wool tack. We are promised cloudless skies and continued warm weather for tomorrow.

About 6 o'clock this morning, the matter of more cotton hulls was brought to me by Mitchell, the are, sent by J. H. to ask if I wished any more. As you may have guessed, the answer was in the affirmative. And so I am provided with more hulls this year than ever before, all of which goes to prove how wrong I was when I bemoaned the news a few months back that all cotton hulls had to be burned this year. At the gin, a special burner was contrived at some expense and all week long the thing burns hulls and by some slight of hand, J. H. rounds up huge truck loads for my consideration.

In passing along the message, Mitchell didn't speak very plainly. He said he had falled on his face Saturday night and that his lips were quite badly swollen. The Saturday night before, Mitchell is said to have lifted six chickens of the ten in a coop belonging to a neighbor of Clemence's. The latter, in speaking of the matter to me a few days ago said she wasn't worrying about anybody stealing hers for she would shoot any one who tried. Mitchell can wave an are with wonderful adroitness but I don't know who would come out ahead in a scuffle with Clemence over hers or anyone else's chickens.



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6317

If you haven't already done so, may I ask you to glance at Dora's letter.

One nice thing about contacts with the outside world is the surprises it brings. For example, it would never have occurred to me to suggest a meeting between you and Sarah Jones, although I imagine you both would enjoy mulling over a plate of soup or an after movie sandwich. Her address, as you may know, is

Sarah Jones,  
Louisiana State Library,

Box 131,  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Knowing of your recent social flurry, it would never occur to me that you would care about getting more bogged down, but possibly this type of thing, being so different, might hold an evening of happiness. I believe you have had all Sarah's letters or cards to me, so you may judge she isn't much of a correspondent, and I haven't seen her in a couple of years, I guess. If you should care to write her, saying you had heard from Norman via Melrose that she intends taking Manhattan by storm, that would be fine. If you don't find yourself so impelled, I would understand that perfectly, too. You can't miss Sarah if you ever should bump into her for although not Plumeppe's height, she has her girth.

And I was a little surprised at Dora's interest in La Storm, so far as considering that Oklahoma might hold any enticements for her and niece. They seem to go everywhere else, however, and so I cannot imagine why they shouldn't go to Oklahoma. What with Kay's interest in airplanes and Dora's unique ability to do things to automobiles, perhaps those two would hit it off with wonderful satisfaction. Both Kay and Dora like animals and food and, although it is hard for me to remember, it may be that both of them are a little on the reserve side at first through timidity. Perhaps we could stop there as to similarities, what with Dora tall and handsome and Kay not inclined to crack a book. But regardless of that, I shall drop Dora a note, suggesting he bounce an autographed Ziba in the direction of Hollywood on the strength of having heard me mention them, and from there on out, they all can see what they can make of it. How soon our little chat terminates, and yet it will continue in a way through the ice bucket.....

6183

6318

Tuesday, September 29th, 1953.

Memorandum:

May I tell you that the Joyous Coast photographs arrived in perfect order in this morning's post and that I am as delighted with them as I am indebted to you for having had them contrived for me.

The wonderful thing about the photograph which I did not notice particularly in the pen sketch is the fact that Pierre Emanuel Prudhomme easily dominates the design, as he should, and I am holding the thought he may continue to do so in the plate. Surely he will in all the publicity cuts, for the cuts will undoubtedly reflect the photograph which is just perfect. Bless your heart.

Before noon today, the thermometer achieved the 100 mark and kept on climbing. You may easily guess whether the treasured ice bucket will be doing business tonight.

And speaking of the ice bucket, the square little box in which it traveled down from Manhattan, --but only the box, --will be heading out tomorrow morning toward Manhattan again, containing some persimmons. I suppose it should reach your true hand along about Monday. I selected some of the less ripe fruit this year, hoping it might reach you before getting too soft. They leave here a pale yellow and will probably taken on an orange tint along the way. I wanted you to see some of the different types, the baby one and the sheep nose one from Melrose, the Japanese one, seemingly having had a string tied around it a third of the way down from Yucca, the pot bellied one from Arenbourg. When they get ripe, you will perhaps be able to try one in conjunction with a glass of milk. I find milk does something very nice as a chaser. I am slipping a paper bag in the top of the package, for the box contains only the fruit, plus the trashy excelsior in which it is cushioned, and I thought you might find it convenient to dispose of the wrappings at the post office. It's always a pleasure to hear from little Miss Lillian



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6319

Trichell whose letter in today's post I enclose. She writes a good letter. I like the poem she quoted and shall ask her for the poet's name. I got a laugh out of her introduction of the word pretzel, for I can well imagine she felt just like one of those things looks, after standing all day on her head in the iris patch.

I saw the ladies at coffee time this morning. Celeste said she has returned exhausted and that she feels she cannot frolic with such abandon as she formerly did. She told me before Madam Regard appeared that that lady seemed awfully tired. That doesn't seem surprising, what with road running in the present heat wave. Celeste also said she had made up her mind definitely not to go to Europe until after her mother's death. I was jolted a little by this statement, merely because I suppose I had expected her to say the same thing the other way around, - that she had foregone all thought of a European trip during her Mother's life time, but that, of course, in a way, is the same thing.

I gather the Mansura households are quite active institutions and I know that one of the sons-in-law does quite a bit of drinking. Celeste said that J. H. suggested that Celeste go ahead with her trip, letting her Mother occupy the Melrose home with him. This is just like J. H., and I think both he and Madam Regard would have the gayest sort of a time but Celeste doesn't favor such an arrangement. I gather that this so called determination may be subject to alterations, but that is merely a guess.

I did a little reading from Catherine Marshall's "The Man Called Peter", - the biography of her husband one time chaplain of the U. S. Senate. It's an interesting book but as in the Sheen volume on quite a different brand of religion, I find some of the viewpoints quite unlike my way of thinking. For instance, somewhere she says something, --I don't recall the precise phraseology, that we all have no right to expect God's grace and should be eternally grateful that He accords us any. I think children have a right to expect a little grace from their parents, earthly and Heavenly and I cannot imagine a mundane or celestial parent who wouldn't expect the child to assume that at least some amount of grace was his due. I want to re-read Zweig's autobiography and have ordered it, --"Two Worlds" or some such.

But I shall struggle along with la Marshall tonight, but the ice bucket is going to make things pleasant going. ....

1860

6320

Wednesday, September 30th, 1953.

Memorandum:

I was mildly provoked the other day when it took six days for your air mail letter to get from there to here. I mentioned the dates to Robina, thinking she might have had air mail problems, but it appears she can cite only good ones, like the regular mail that Dora got in 24 hours a while back. Isn't it good to know that Robina is making it alright, and I'm hoping during this present heat wave that she may avoid tearing a bout too speedily.

I suppose everyone is pleased with Governor Warren's appointment as Chief Justice, --everyone except the ultra Republicans. I asked J. H. at supper what he thought of the appointment. He said Warren was too liberal to suit him. I suspect that is about the way everyone in the Cabinet would express himself if anybody in that exalted situation really spoke his mind.

There was a flurry of excitement up the road last night about 12. A dance was going on, just nicely getting under way, it was said at Ashley Kirklands, perhaps a mile up the Bermuda road from here, when someone reported something awful had just happened a little further along the highway. Everyone left the dance for a look and it wasn't a pretty sight. One Wade Moore, colored, of Hatchitoches and a school teacher, - a colored lady of the same town, --and school teacher means the top of the social ladder in colored circles, had left the dance a few minutes before but had stopped as a car was coming this way and Wade Moore shot the lady school teacher through the temple and then turned his gun on himself in the same place. Both apparently had died instantly.

Helen, secretary, had told me she was going to the dance because they were having an orchestra from Texas she wanted especially to hear, for Helen, you may recall, toots a mean clarinet on her own hook. She said that after everybody at the dance had visited the murder scene, some of the people returned to the dance but nobody seemed to feel like dancing and



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6321

most of the people went home so she didn't hear much music after all.

In town people are attending a law suit involving insurance, "Cousin" Arthur and R. B. Williams are opposing insurance lawyers, --the same ones who handled the insurance interests in the Swan burning of Homewood, -- Sinclair Adams. It is expected the Watson-Williams firm will win the suit because it is almost impossible to prove arson, although everyone suppose it was a case of arson. Clarisse Breazeale is asking for \$12,500.00 for a fire in her home. She was the drunken bag who once came to see Miss Cammie and who spun me around as we were getting out of the Madam's room in such a way that she landed on the sofa and I on her lap just as the Presbyterian minister entered the room to everyone's surprise except Clarisse's. A couple people have told me of going to her house with a view to assisting the firemen extinguish the blaze when they were screamed at by the lady who declared that hers was a private fire and if she wanted any fire fighters she would send for them. It is assumed she started the thing but insurance companies usually loose such cases unless somebody swears having seen the person start the conflagration, and usually, of course, people intent on such business, see to it they aren't observe at the inception of the thing, especially when it is their own dwelling.

The news from Rock Hall was pleasant and you will note the pen sketch of the Joyous Coast reached their true hand safely thanks to you kindness.

There are two imponderable elements in the Bermuda plate that caused me to do a bit of calculating in hopes of determining when it would be best to engineer local releases. With the shipment having started on its way on the 24th it might reach its destination almost any old time within 5 to 20 days, --a difficult potential to contend with. And then the time required for a cut to be made and the publicity to be decided upon is also a little unmanageable to hit on with any accuracy. I don't want the cart before the horse but increase demand for space at this season make the earliest possible moment the best, and so I am banking on a week from hursday, although only then will I know if the things dovetail neatly or fail to coincide at all.

So things turn and the weather remains oven-like but my faithful ice bucket stands and waits and now I turn to it.....

0550

6322

Thursday, October 1st, 1953.

Memorandum:

The waves of heat continue but so do the cubes of the beloved ice bucket and so everything comes out even, thanks to little Miss Lee.

Today's post was rather heavy although it contained little of interest. I shall enclose a few herewith or under separate cover, although if you are pressed for time, you may skip everything, including this memo., for all items represent merely day to day doings and nothing of especial moment.

I have intended asking before about the man of whom I never hear anything mentioned anymore, --an individual not precisely in the penniless unemployed that politicians in the 1930's referred to as "the forgotten man" but a man, nevertheless of whom I hear nothing mentioned. Of course the gentleman I have in mind is the husband of the American Ambassador to Italy. Did he go along to Rome or did he "stay put" in the Life and Time building or what has happened to him. To be quite honest about it, I frankly don't care what has happened to Mr. Luce since he is probably quite capable of taking care of himself but still, with so much talk about the other dominant member of that duo, I found myself wondering if he had survived all the excitement of the past year.

There was some talk about pecanes at supper. As yet nobody seems to be able to determine what they are going to sell for this year. Members of the Pecane Growers Association are scheduled to pass this way on the morrow to go into conclave about it. I should think advertising of a product of this sort ought to carry some information as to price. J. H. says he thinks a ten pound sack will be priced at about \$5.00, pre-paid anywhere in the United States. I haven't heard if Hurricane Florence swept away the Georgia crop. If so, the price will probably be effected somewhat. Probably the Texas crop is short because of the prolonged drought in the Lone Star State. J. H. is contacting the



6323

Post Office Department in Washington to see what is what about the shipping of pecanes to California. A year or two ago California passed a law prohibiting pecanes from being brought or sent into that State. We have all seen automobiles searched on State lines and various types of plants confiscated. I assume various States have passed laws concerning such matters when it is established that the plants may carry some insect that is a threat to agriculture. So far as I know, Louisiana pecanes harbor no such pest and it would appear California passed the exclusion law merely because California wanted to foster its own pecane industry. If this be so, there is every probability that the Supreme Court would hold such legislation unconstitutional, as unwarranted interference with inter-State commerce. I have no idea if a test case has been made. Wouldn't it be interesting if J. H. should start suit in behalf of the Pecane Growers Association and that the new Chief Justice from California should find it one of the early item pending on his docket.

Rosalyn Aswell telephoned me this evening. She said things were going better and when I explained I hadn't heard they were going otherwise, she explained that Jimmy, cold sober, a couple of weeks ago, fell in the bath tub and broke three of ribs. And after that, there was no bath because their well went dry, and then the car broke down and so on. But she is a gay conversationalist and it was good to hear her voice. I asked her about that El Chico suit at which Jimmy testified months back and she said El Chico won. She said she and Jimmy used to go to that Village restaurant much when they lived in Manhattan and had become quite good friends with the owner. Although bull fight films are forbidden importation into the United States, it was possible when Royalty was present to arrange private showings and that shortly before his death in Miami, Alphonso's eldest son, --the Prince of the Asturias, spent lots of time at El Chico on gala nights and that they enjoyed the opportunity for prolonged personal chats. She said the Prince was very thin and very tall and very blonde as everyone knew who had seen his pictures, but until she had met him, she hadn't realized he had a club foot which made it difficult for him to get about but that he loved to see his companions swing out, even though that was denied him. Well, so much for local gossip and I fear this is among the duller letters. Perhaps I'll do better on our next go-round...

6324

Friday, October 2nd, 1953.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Sunday letter in today's post.

And how badly I played at Patience until first dark, awaiting the arrival of some sort of a secretary. Helen is still on the sick list and as the cotton pickers get paid off on Friday afternoon, I reckon everyone who can march at the close of a hot week of labor has moseyed right along up the road to the honkey-tonk for the Friday night movie. And so your letter is tucked safely away in an armoire, along with a few other items which will have more chance for exploration on the morrow. The mere presence of the unopened envelope, however, is sufficient to make my beginning of another week end altogether happy, what with the promise the envelope's contents hold for the morrow.

This morning at the coffee hour, I found Madam Regard radiant. Yours was her first birthday greeting and she and Celeste and I agreed that it was among the more perfect birthday greetings we had ever run across. And Madam Regard was moved to tears in reading me the lovely message you had penned just for her and when she was able to speak again, she remarked with fervor that "long ago we have all agreed that she is the loveliest person, most thoughtful and kind we have ever known". And I squeezed her hand and she dabbed at her tears and everybody was as happy as could be, --thanks all through the coffee hour, just to little Miss Lee.

I suppose the book you mentioned will arrive on the morrow or Monday. Madam Regard is so impatient to see it, and then remarked all over again what a wonderful one is the person who will so study out things for the happiness of others. If your ears weren't burning this Friday morning at 9, it certainly was not for lack of bouquets being tossed at you across the miles between. How nice it must make one feel to realize how much happiness one has set in motion for three others all in one go-round.

Both heat and pilgrims continue and as the promise is for similar weather over the week end, I suppose the pattern will be as cluttered up with road runners as usual.



1883

6325

I left out of yesterday's enclosures the odd little epistle I am enclosing herewith. As the letter was written and cancelled on the 23rd and traveled the 15 miles as between Hatchitoches and Melrose by October 1st, I suppose I should not complain when mails from farther afield sometimes require 6 or 7 days.

I am hoping to get a little time to read over the week end. Today I received the autobiography of Zweig, --Two Worlds, or some such title, although that isn't precisely it, for I wanted to re-read it and it is served up at a maximum of delectation through the meidum of your friend, Alexander Scourby. And the mention of that name reminds me that I was tuning in on Frank Edwards the other night, perhaps last night, just as all stations were concluding their pre-Edwards presentations and I chanced to be on some National station that was enumerating the characters who had appeared in the play just given, and one "Alex Scourby" was one and some erry woman, --also a Foundation for the Blind reader and a third person whose name I have forgotten. I thought it itneresting that three people doing business in the same institution on West 16th Street should all be in the same play. Naturally I wish I had known of the program in advance.

Among yesterday's enclosures was Madam Marco's letter which had enclosed the snapshots of Mead Villa and Propinquity. Neither one looked too entrancing but I thought it nice of her to send both of them, Propinquity, being, as you remember, the home of Mrs. B. L. C. Wailes' parents, General and Mrs. Leonard Covington. I shall be interested to see what other things Madam Marco has in mind to pass along. It is certainly kind of her to be sending them in this direction.

Some more gourd vines have succumbed and so I gathered the fruit on the dried vines today. One of them put me in mind a little of the suet balls for our feathered frients of last Christmas time. One is a beautiful yellow, quite round and larger than an orange, is perhaps the size of a small grape-fruit, and has strange little bumps all over it. I have it in a dish with some persimmons and they look so nice together.

Did I hear on the radio that Frank Carmen of Columbia had been named by the President to act on the Board looking into the dock strike. If I understood correctly, I am glad, for he is one man I know on any Federal Board whom I admire through personal acquaintance with his many sterling qualities and liberalness of mind. -- So much to talk about, and yet the week end begins and I must look to my ice bucket and Herr Zweig, keeping one eye on my armoir the while until the morrow.....

1883

6326

Sunday, October 4th, 1953.

Memorandum:

How nice to have your letter on Saturday, after it had waited patiently in the armoir during Friday night.

And may I hasten to congratulate you on the doings of one Tuesday. Wasn't it odd how you had decided on that particular day to bring up a matter which, unbeknown to you, had been settled prior to that day and the news passed along within the hour just before you had decided to speak of the matter which had already been settled in your own mind.

I am so happy that at long last those who are enjoying the benefits of your contributions to the success of their enterprise should have made a gesture. Let us hope the continue seeing the light in the days ahead.

And may I thank you for acquainting me with the nature of the two movies, both of which sounded wonderfully interesting. I never cease to be amazed that people continue carrying cameras into East Berlin, for it would seem a camera discovered on one's person is a guarantee for difficulties. As a matter of fact, I was mildly astonished when Ed. Morrow mentioned having toated one under his coat when he ventured over behind the curtain during his recent visit.

And speaking of East Berlin, I must say it is a little vague in my mind as to how the line of demarkation between Russian and U. M. zones are definted and how it is that people apparantly move back and forth across the line daily although, I assume their are guards of some sort or other stationed there all the time. Do you reckon any attempt is made to prevent unusual numbers of people corssing at any give moment and are the two zones sealed off at night and can one move household effects from one zone to another without a heap of preliminaries. I suppose all this would be clearer to me if I had read the papers during the past 8 years but somehow the whole business seems mighty uncertain in my notion as to how the whole thing is rigged up.

.....because the most card and the most card



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6327

Joe Henry came unexpectedly on Saturday morning and remained until after dinner today. He seemed exhausted and I suppose this was due in part to the fact that he is inclined to suffer from hay fever and, what with all the dryness obtaining across Louisiana and Texas at the moment, the dust is constant. I got a chance to talk with him for a few minutes on Saturday evening and he had hoped for another chat later but pilgrims got in between us.

The pilgrims hailed from McKinney, Texas and were one time friends of the Purple Lady. They had long been communicants of Dr. Clifford Weaver's church, --Episcopalian and they seemed surprised when I expressed astonishment at the news that Dr. Weaver had been dead quite a long time. I had some correspondence with him, following the Madam's death, and I had known of his marriage to a secretary, following the death of the purple number. I am wondering if Rudolph knew of Dr. Weaver's passing. Oddly enough he has never mentioned it, so perhaps he may have not learned of it either, although that seems unlikely.

The situation in horticultural spheres at this bend of the river is pure hurly burly. More of the Chinese magnolias are in flower, --some of the trees being completely covered with blossoms. But this mis-reading of the calendar, mis-reading October for February is in evidence in many other botanic quarters. Everybody knows that the Japanese water hyacinthes never bloom save in April and May, or perhaps May and April. People from South Louisiana where they abound, express astonishment at the purple veil spreading over the big pot and St. Giggin's Fountain. I have never in Spring seen so many blossoms all at the same time as are embossing the sugar kettles. Most of the leaves of the plants in the big pot are dead which gives the flowers unusual prominence but the foliage on the surface of St. Giggin's is wonderfully luxuriant still. Perhaps the shade afforded St. Giggin tends to preserve the greenery, -- that is about the only conclusion I can arrive at, although the flowers in each setting are equally splendid.

Dan and Joe were the only extra people for the birthday dinner across the fence today. We dined on turkey, marvelous baked mashed potatoes, and equally marvelous dressing, although with two or three other vegetables, jellies pickles and olives with a pleasant wine and afterward a birthday cake with gobs of walnut ice cream, coffee and so on. Madam Regard still says yours was the nicest card she received.....

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6328

Monday, October 5th, 1953.

Memorandum:

Ten pieces of mail, including one from little Miss Lee, are tucked away in the armoire tonight. Helen remains on the sick list and the rest of the secretariat apparently is on a frolic. Occasionally as between the opening of the first cotton boll and the picking of the last pecane, the whole plantation seems to go on an anti-routine bender, -- and today was one of those.

J. H. left for Baton Rouge before many of the people had appeared for work, and some of those who did show up were under the effects of too much week end whoopee. As the day progressed, Monday became Sunday all over again and, among other things, the mail didn't get read as a consequence.

Fortunately, however, this is a plantation thing and Texas and Pacific Motor service maintained its schedule and shortly after noon brought me the new Joyous Coast plates. I haven't given them but a casual glance but I gather they turned out alright. Sometime between now and tomorrow's dawn, a sample will be wrapped up and sent rolling in your direction. If you will be so kind as to tell me any slips that may have occurred between the final pen sketch and the finished product, I shall feel vastly indebted to you.

Charles Cunningham telephoned me this afternoon to say that a likeness of the sketch from your photograph, will appear in this week's Watchtowers Times. Thus the hodge-podge, grab-in-the-dark effort at hoping the arrival of the merchandise and the publicity actually came off as though calculated by precision. The plate, of course, will have only local appeal but let us hope its appearance gives a sales impetus to the other five who seem to have been dawdling of late a little.



8333

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Of late I have been experiencing an intuitive feeling that following the announcement in the press during the summer that a "device", styled an H bomb had been exploded in Russia, the Administration, after a bit of fumbling, decided to use the announcement concerning said "device" as an excuse for sliding out of their over-talked budget balancing business which seems to be something almost sacred in Republican eyes. Last night, during and after Miss Rountree's skit with politician Coles, I felt the earlier sensation confirmed. I am wondering if you, too, have been feeling that the "H" business was being put forward as an excuse to cover any one of half a dozen reasons, seemingly valid, for failure to keep campaign promises. At best the whole business seems to make little sense, except, perhaps, to the Republicans, --such as cutting air force appropriations to get a better air force; Congress failing to do much about bomb shelters etc., while members of the Atomic Commission voice dismay that the people aren't sufficiently excited about persuading Congress to do more for civil defense. And at the same time, the scientists whom I hear and occasionally read, bemoan the fact that we haven't more college students studying science, since it takes endless scientific minds to keep abreast with atomic development while at the same time Russia, not famous for extraordinary college training courses, is said to have exploded something or other, --at first nobody would admit it was a bomb, but now they seem to have exploded a "H" bomb, since that seems to fit in with the desires of the disappointed budget balancers, and I, for one in the class of average citizens, haven't the vaguest notion as to how much is truth and how much is eyewash and I must say I think the Administration is doing a great dis-service to the public and itself in failing to present some sort of an honest picture of the situation. Sometimes it would almost seem we are setting forth to the world and Russia in particular that we are scared to death of them, the policy makers hoping that Russia will pay no attention and only the American citizen will be frightened out of a year's growth. In short, an Army leader or a business executive sometimes is totally lacking in political acumen, and what the country needs in relation to atoms is somebody who can make comprehensible what the public needs to eliminate the uncertainty that I for one feel, not so much about Russian "h's" but American baloney if that is what we have been getting and I frankly am wondering and so am up in the air. But I'm down to earth in the ice bucket department to which I now turn whole heartedly, thanks to just one.....

1833

6330

Tuesday, October 6th, 1953.

Memorandum:

How nice to have another letter from you in this morning's post, to be tucked away beside the one of yesterday which, along with a stack of other things, awaits the morrow.

Helen remains on the sick list and the other secretaries are still on a frolic. But tomorrow I am guaranteed lots of assistance, for Wednesday night is show night and that means the amount of proffered help will be monumental.

You will be pleased to know that Madam Regard was enchanted today when Dr. Crabb's volume which you had selected as her birthday gift, arrived. She had received her mail before I passed by for a dab at the coffee cup, and it obviously delighted her to show it to me and then to hold it on her lap gently rubbing her hand across it time and again during our little sitting. She will eventually be writing you on the subject but in the mean time, I hope you don't mind if I anticipate her news by telling you in advance that she is enormously happy that you should have been so thoughtful to and of her.

It was a repeat birthday party, in a way, since there were other gifts and I tossed her a Joyous Coast plate just for fun. I am under the impression one of her daughters in Mansura is making a collection and I suppose she rolls them along in that direction as Celeste has enough about the place, gracing the dining room and breakfast nook walls.

A breath of cool air journeyed this far South during the night so that this morning the thermometer stood at a low 60. But the skies were cloudless and as soon as the sun was up and doing, so was the thermometer. A 15 mile breeze made for comfort, however, and I believe we are about on the point of moving into real Indian Summer although we shall still have many hot days before October's played out.

The matter of one phase of doings in that little old town



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of Elizabeth, La. was revealed today by a lawyer friend of J. H.'s who chanced to pass this way and stop for a little chat. I suppose the metropolitan papers may have mentioned the disorders that have characterized the year old strike in that community which, I believe, is about 100 per cent hill billy. The lawyer said he was with the Sheriff in the Elizabeth area a while back when the Sheriff arrested a youth for driving a car containing contraband stuff. It chanced that this lawyer handled the prosecution when it came up in Court although nothing much was expected other than formalities, since only the youth, the Sheriff and the lawyer had been present. The youth, however, called for a jury trial and 20 different men went on the stand to swear that they had been with the youth, --the car was entirely vacant, actually, at the time of his arrest. So many of this impelled the Judge to dismiss the case whereupon the lawyer apologized to the Judge for obviously having been so mistaken since neither he nor the Sheriff had seen a soul, although, according to the testimony, there were 20 people in the conveyance. I suppose this in one of the minor straws indicating just why things continue so by sires and sevens in that strike torn neighborhood.

I listened to E. Roscoe Morrow tonight and gathered that he, too, is a little confused when the Chairman of the Joint Congressional Committee gives one to understand that Russia is bristling with H bombs and today the Secretary of Defense guesses there will be H bombs in Russia 3 years hence. Three years hence, of course, will be just the time for another Presidential election. But aside from the politics, or because of politics, is there any doubt that the American Secret Service doesn't know whether Russia has H bombs or does not have them. And if the agents behind the Curta n know, then their chief in Washington knows, and the citizen continues to be taken for a big ride. If only the gentlemen in control of such secrets, -- Defense and Atomic Commission then at least they ought to agree on a story if they both or singly, decide that a platter of hokus-pokus is to be served up to the citizens.

I read a little last night from "World of Yesterday" by Zweig and like it as much as ever. I look forward to the morrow when I shall have two letters to enjoy.....

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10/8 47 2m

Wednesday, October 7th, 1953.

Memorandum:

How nice to begin with your Wednesday letter this evening.

Helen remains on the sick list but, as anticipated, the balance of the secretariat showed up, in hopes of seeing the show, but.....just as we dipped into the first letter, news came that a fire had broken out in unginned cotton somewhere around the gin, --and the secretariat vanished. But before they bolted, they were given to understand they would be on hand for duty at this desk before noon on the morrow or else.....And so I have the assurance of having a chat with you along about first day and I shall also take that opportunity to run through quite a few letters resting beneath yours, and so my correspondence will be in order again, --I hope.

The day has been beautiful a beautiful blue sky, and bracing breeze and the temperature at 54 this morning, rinsing to the mid 70's for the day's high.

Celeste had heard me express my intention to get into the big road this morning and offered to serve as chauffeur. We skipped up the road at a brisk clip at 9 o'clock and were back home by 10. First we stopped at the farthest point on my journey, --Oaklawn, which I still think of as Cashmere, where I presented Mrs. Adeline CPrudhomme Cloutier with a Joyous Coast plate carrying the likeness of her home. She is a charming elderly lady, --by the way, she is the mother of Vernon Cloutier. The avenue was lovely in the morning sun and the house turned out to be ever so much larger than I had supposed. We walked on the gallery a bit, chatted much and then went on our way.

Our next stop was at Beaufort and Luck was with us, for Beth was in town. The servant tried giving us coffee but we demurred, and slid down the road, passing the old avenue where Lestan used to stroll with his Blackstone, and thence we drove in to the Alphonse Prudhommes at Oakland. We found Madame Alphonse had already received at guess, --Herr Dunnington or Dunninger or some such, a Vinese number of Shreveport who had been to Melrose once with Clif Byrd or at Allen or some of that crew. We chatted for a few moments in the shadow of the original portrait of Pierre Emanuel, looking down at us from the wall of the drawing room, and then we made our au revours. In each case I had presented the

W.P.P.



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wrapped plate just as we were leaving, giving nobody an opportunity to get a glance at it before we were out of sight.

Then we continued South, not crossing the bridge at Oakland but continuing along the West bank of Cane River, expecting to stop at Bill Jones' house. It was pleasant to stop for a moment to glimpse at Reform Plantation and see that it is still there. Down the road a mile further, we passed a truck parked by a cotton field and Celeste said Bill Jones was there and did I want to stop or go on to his house. I wanted to stop there, and Bill explained that there was no one at home at his house and so I left the plate with him. He said his brother, Randolph, is planning to restore Reform Plantation house, --thank heavens.

And so we were back home again a few minutes later and a duty which was a pleasure had been performed. I think Miss Adeline and the Alphonse Prudhommes will like their plates and I know Bill Jones will be tickled with his. It was a great pleasure to contact all three parties and because Beth is a bag, I don't care if she has time to glance at it or not. If she takes to it, she can afford to buy many for presents, and I should like that, but all the others have a capacity for a sensation of happy humanities, and naturally that is all that counts in such early morning neighborly calls.

If you chanced to hear E. Roscoe Morrow tonight, you probably gathered he had been "reading our mail", for the sentiments I had voiced a night or two ago about the confusion in the public mind over the status of the H bomb and all certainly got a thorough airing on his program tonight, so it appears we are not the only ones feeling somewhat befuddled by the seemingly contradictory opinions being voiced by Republican big wigs of late. The mot of my day was taken up with pilgrims, --New York, New Orleans, San Francisco, Shreveport, Houston and Oklahoma City.

Celeste is throwing some kind of a party tomorrow and as my contribution, -- although I shall not attend, I rounded up a wooden tray, perhaps 10 inches wide and 30 inches long, heaping it up with some yellow, some orange persimmons, 8 different kinds of yellow and green striped small gourds, & tucked in a few magnolia forscati leaves and shall crown her with it tomorrow. Now for a couple page of S. Zweig and so to bed.....

6334

7/4 Tues. 13

Thursday, October 8th, 1953.

Memorandum:

A cool 45 this morning rapidly gave way to the upper 70's, thanks to an absence of breeze and a cloudless sky.

Helen is recuperating but has not returned to her cotton picking as yet. She did venture over to examine a bit of correspondence for me, however, and I regretted that of all times, a delay in letter reading had come about at this particular time. Save for a single exception, nothing was particularly pressing but I did get off a memo to Miss Lee promptly.

Elythe passed this way in the afternoon, bringing Mary Pringle with her and a Senor and Senora Rodriguez or some such name, not to mention a bottle of Taylor's port.

The Cuban couple live somewhere near Mary, the senor being a chemist at the Meeker sugar refinery near Lecompte, La. These Cubans have been there a year and were at Lafayette, La. in connection with a sugar factory there during the two previous years. It seems a bit odd that starting out from Florida's next door neighbor which must hear quite a bit of American radio and encounter quite a few Americans, and after living in Louisiana for three years, neither husband nor wife could understand or speak a word of anything but Spanish.

They were interested in everything they saw, buildings and vegetations, and I accordingly was glad to explain what I could to them although I fear they got more out of the pantomime I employed than by inadequate Spanish. But they seemed to comprehend alright and were delighted when I said I didn't care how much they used their camera.

Mary told me she had taken a picture of



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an Ethiopian hand clasping a boll of cotton in the palm of said hand. She said she believed it was just the composition I wanted and would send it along to me shortly when printed. I must have described what I had in mind very poorly, for what I had envisioned was the cotton boll still on the plant while the camera would not catch the palm of the hand but rather the back of the hand as the fingers, in a vertical position, were just reaching for the snowy staple. Perhaps one or the other of various photographers I have asked to make this study will strike something more in line with my concept. I suppose I should have explained to Mary, too, that I had in mind the hand of a man, -- definitely on the physical strength side, the better to contrast the delicacy of the lint. Either such a subject or the hand of a child, almost tiny by contrast with the opulence of the cotton it was about to grasp. She said she had used a woman's hand.

A letter from Hollywood in Kay's hand speaks of Carolyn coming to dinner with them. A letter from Essae Mae hints that Lois Lester did not see eye to eye with Mrs. Stirling regarding Oakley. This is only a hint, for Essae Mae is too good a politician to set forth anything concrete on such a subject. The effect of her letter on me was that probably the rumor about Lois being the source of irritation was probably more or less correct.

I was glad in finding a letter from Ruth Hopkins, too, -- penned from Glendale Sanatorium in Maryland. What with the July carbon copies along with her letter to me, there seemed to be quite a lot of reading material, all of which appears to be excellent, although I scanned it with vast rapidity.

A letter from Dora speaking of a new address, much nearer the university. These and other bits of correspondence coming to hand during the recent non-reading days, will be kept in a file with this memo, to be forwarded shortly when a proper address comes to hand.

The afternoon party across the fence terminated before dark. One of the guests, I learned by telephone, wanted to purchase the gourd-persimmon arrangement that graced the buffet. I voted in favor of a gift instead.....

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17 1/2 Tues. 13

Friday, October 9th, 1953.

**Memorandum:**

There never was such favorable weather for cotton picking, and the gin chugs along merrily from dawn to dusk. The thermometer graph describes a curve each 24 hours starting in the 50's, touching a high point in the 80's and thence downward again to the 50's, making daylight and dark equally delicious and invigorating.

Just before the supper bell ring, I passed by the house next door to give Madam Regard some persimmons. Celeste had gone to town earlier in the afternoon and now that dusk was settling down, both Madam Regard and I assumed that the car driving in and stopping in front of the house was Celeste. I stepped out to give her a hand with her packages, only to discover that the car was not Celeste's but was being driven by a couple of nuns from Hatchittches. One of them was non-descript, the other tall, svelt and majestic. She said, on descending from her horseless carriage:

"This is the first time I have ever been here but I feel I know you quite well for very often I go over on Front Street and never seem to tire learning about Hatchittches by examining your plates in the window."

I handed the ladies over to Madam Regard and went on my way. Half an hour later, J. H. and a couple of clerks came to supper. J. H. was laughing about his gavotte with the nuns. It seems they had left Madam Regard and gone to the store, overflowing at the time, -- the store not the nuns, with cotton pickers being paid off for their week's labors. In respect for their robes, J. H. gave them priority and they asked him for a donation for something the Church was cooking up. J. H. took out his check book and



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wrote out a check for fifty dollars which he handed to the taller nun. Then, as the nun was tucking the check within the folds of her robes, she mentioned something the Hatchitoches Church was up to, whereupon J. H. who had assumed the pair were from St. Augustin's Church across the river, inquired about the point, and on learning that the gals had invaded the St. Augustin Parish on their money collecting jaunt, J. H. asked the majestic one to give him back the check which he returned to his desk, substituting afor it a ten dollar bill which he gave her in exchange. In short, the Reverend Sister was thereby treated to an example of how a girl can talk herself out of \$40.00 before she knows it.

On reaching home, I found that while we were at supper, somebody had passed this way and left me a copy of the Hatchitoches Times containing the notice about the Joyous Coast plate. It made page 2, and I shall attach it herewith. As yet I haven't read the piece in print form but from its length, it seems to me it probably wasn't cut much. As you know, the purpose of this piece was to use the Joyous Coast plate, which will never enjoy wide appeal, as a sort of spring board by which means the average citizen will feel inclined to invest in other items in the series. There is no question about the initial twelve dozen being disposed of but what I am hoping is that its bow at this time may incline other items to start rolling.

I think I may not have mentioned that Grandpa has a couple of new playthings which, just by chance, happen to be borthers of a younger generation. They are a pair of coal black kittens, which I am pleased to give the somewhat cumbersome names of Inner Mongolia and Outer Mongolia, Outer Mongolia always being sedate and well-mannered and never of the pushing sort as opposed to Inner Mongolia who is forever sitting on my doorstep and scooting in, everytime the screen door opens. I am hoping the big old yellow wildcat inhabiting the bamboo hedge in Celeste's direction doesn't mangle either of them to death, for they make a gay pair, disporting all day along the gallery.

Thus begins the week end with a promise of pretty weather meaning, I suppose, plenty of pilgrims.....

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W. Y. Tues. 13<sup>th</sup>

6338

Sunday, October 11th, 1953.

Memorandum:  
How nice to find your Tuesday letter in Saturday's post.

I am glad you liked the persimmons. I am glad, too, that they arrived before ~~re~~ ripening too much in transit.

You will laugh when I tell you what happened in an episode in which one of mine figured. I may have mentioned that I banked the mud walls of the south gallery of this house with great branches of persimmons, with a dozen or two fat persimmons depending prettily from each branch, non-chalantly draped across the array of deer antlers, just above the old bench from Grandpere's original church across the way. A somewhat plump, kindly but altogether tiresome bag perched herself on the bench on Saturday afternoon, catching her breath a bit as I expounded the fascinating architectural features of the gallery to her companion pilgrims. In the group was an especially energetic, inquisitive woman who never listened to the answers of the questions she asked, and while I was pointing out the slave hardware on the shutters of the barred windows on the right of the door to my boudoir, the energetic number began fiddling with the persimmon branches above the bench on the left of the door. In the midst of my harangue, there was a startled scream from the exhausted over weight number on the bench. Her companion, in messing about with the branches, had jarred one of them just enough to loosen one of the finest examples of over-ripe fruit from its stem. The thing dropped straight as an arrow, splashing slap on the seated lady's neck, and instantly, before she could move, trickling down her back.

There's something so lush about a perfectly ripened persimmon in the bowl of a spoon but oozing down one's bare back, inside one's clothing is probably something else again.

Naturally the tour came to a complete halt while the laides retired to the bath room to see what could be done about it, but their success was meager as evidenced by the sticky streak down the victims dark green silk waist when, after hours, she issued forth again. From this experience, I conclude some adage might be contrived, --"Always eat up but never sit under an over ripe persimmon, --or some such.



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Well can anybody, especially Lestan, imagine with what fervor Miss Lee is holding the thought these days. As a natural consequence of this matter, I found myself wondering the other day how professional people do, such as literary agents, in the matter falling under the Summerfield department. I assume that a person may be on the receiving end with either or both the domestic and professional name, although it may be that separate compartments are required for each individual name. Frequently, as we all know, several firm names operate and receive communications at the same address in several different names. If this be true with individual compartments, it would be interesting to know so that on alternate days or weeks or however, first the personal and then the professional name be employed. Although unlikely, it is always possible although very rarely that somebody like E. Smith and say F. Smith, having neighborly berths, might find an error had been made in assorting things. Just to be positive no such error should be made and for the convenience of everyone, the use of the professional name might accordingly be welcomed by those having to do with the sorting. I know nothing about any of this but have wondered about it. Locally, of course, such an arrangement is just as easy as one, two, three, but I suppose the more tremendous concentrations work out special guides for general convenience that probably differ largely in the vast variety of places.

I am hoping you had the good fortune to hear Dumas Malone and T.V. Smith as guests of Dr. Bryson today in the discussion of Thomas Jefferson's "Notes on the State of Virginia". Although the animation characterizing the discussion of Alice Through the Looking Glass was absent, the pleasure of the profundity and the realization that authorities were speaking made everything said quite thrilling. They announced "The Olden Bough" for next week with Dr. Montagu and some other philosophers for next week. I never did get far in The Golden Bough but I got a long ways with Dr. Montagu on occasion, - surely the most absent minded professor I ever was acquainted with. I hope he doesn't forget his appointment for the Invitation, for it will be pleasant hearing his voice again.

The hot dry weather and the pilgrims continue but the thermometer falls at night even as do over ripe persimmons in the day, and so all swings along merrily toward a new week.....

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*Airmail*

Monday, October 12th, 1953.

Memorandum:

How nice to have your Friday's air mail in today's post.

I just come from the gallery where the new moon offers just enough light to make the sun dial ghostly. But the gallery itself is lovely, for the Chapel doors have been left ajar, casting a soft glow from the new candles that are flaming there tonight. There are so many things to be thankful for, and it's so pleasant to enumerate them to one's self in the friendly neighborhood of "us-es little boy".

And speaking of "us-es" reminds me of our friends and how remarkable they are. I had a marvelous example of it today. On receiving the air mail and noting that it was of unusual brevity, I thought I simply couldn't wait until first dark, which is a long time from 9 in the morning when such portentous news might be to hand. And so I passed through the kitchen on my way to Yucca and, finding Juanita, a high school graduate, alone, I asked her if she would tell me what the few sentences said, -----

She gazed at them for perhaps two minutes, which is a long time, and then said:

"I can't tell you exactly how the words have it, but it say they will be here this afternoon."

Naturally I expressed my appreciation to her for her assistance and bolted out the door as fast as my legs would carry me, fearing I would collapse with suppressed merriment before I got beyond ear shot. And so I resumed my old game of Patience until 5:30 when Helen finally showed up and I could join silently with you in a prayer of gratitude for the wonderful news it contained.

I shall send this memo by air, and at the same time I shall post a couple of envelopes, one containing



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memos of Thursday, Friday and Sunday, none of which are of any importance, and a second envelope in which there will be a letter or two that I have perhaps referred to in the memos.

I suppose you probably received the very laconic message I sent by air on Friday at about the same time your air mail came to hand at this bend of the river. Come to think of it, as suggested in that brief note, I do not chance to have the precise business name which I am sure you have mentioned many a time. At the moment, however, I find myself uncertain if the general organizational name is used or if there are a flock of subsidiaries which would be the proper things to keep in mind if one were using the Madison Avenue address which I did not employ, since I was not certain on this point.

You will be interested to learn that Melrose will advertisement pecan in the Magazine Section of The New York Times four weeks from yesterday, October 11th, -- whenever four weeks from then may be, and you will be perhaps even more interested when I report that J. H. said to me at dinner yesterday:

"Oh, by the way, do you reckon that lady in New York sees the Times and might send us a clipping of the advertisement when it appears."

I told him my guess is that she probably would, and should you run across the thing, it might be a happy stroke to address it slap to him, should you find yourself possessed of an extra clipping. I think the thing will be quite small, -- perhaps an inch or so, which probably will mean that looking for it will be like hunting for a needle in a haystack, in view of all the holiday advertising that is probably scheduled to appear along about then. Don't put yourself out looking for it, but, in case you should stumble over it, you might keep J. H. in mind.

The warm weather continues with a promise for more ahead and the ice bucket continues to make my evenings wonderfully pleasant. Tonight lemonade is on the docket and I look forward to the same with infinite relish.

And how nice that will bring my day to a close, -- such a happy day, thanks to your thoughtful message. I am going to sit for half an hour, bucket along side, on the gallery, with the Blessed Martin hard by, and a joyous stream of telepathic messages flowing in a bee line in a single direction.....

6163

6342

Tuesday, October 13th, 1953.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your longer and later letter of Friday in this morning's post.

I laughed to myself as you related the somewhat harrowing circumstances under which you were penning the lines, but the arrival of the letter itself convinced me that they didn't close down on you completely.

Oddly enough, I had a different but as distracting a sitting in my attempt to run through today's post. Helen arrived about 5:30, and just as we were in the midst of things, a voice from the distance of the big pot called my name. I thought it was Celeste and told Helen to keep right on going. But a second call from the gallery convinced me it wasn't Celeste and so I stepped out to hear the lady say:

"This is Irma".

You could have knocked me down with a fender, and as shadows were beginning to lengthen, -- I suppose it was 5:45 by then, I thought of all the Tillinghasts I ever knew, and eventually came through with the realization that the invader was none other than I. Somperyc Willard. That was a relief that permitted me to return to my original panic of rush, and I whisked her into the living room and this in spite of the fact that she said she could stay but a minute, and I resumed with Helen. But two seconds later, a six year old ebony number appeared at the door, -- Juanita's little Melviny, saying that mama say everybody's eatin'".

Mail digested under such circumstances doesn't get much mastication, I must say. Tomorrow we shall try again.

I sincerely appreciate your thoughtfulness in telling me of the circumstances leading up to the uncertainty of the past three weeks. It must have been most relaxing when the final



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decision was made. It is so pleasant to know that all that is behind us. It goes without saying, of course, that I understand perfectly about the wisdom in discouraging personal contacts from the uninitiated. The telephone, of course, is the only weak point but it is so easy to side step such an eventuality by remaining anonymous as regards personalities in the Gulf States area and I subscribe to your ideas on the matter 100 per cent. I passed along Dora's reference to Sarah Jones as a matter of course, but, if I remember correctly, I think I pointed out in my own memo that I was quite indifferent as to whether you acted on it or not, and in view of all the circumstances, I can so easily appreciate your position regarding such matters.

I'm so glad the persimmons are to your liking and that they didn't get ahead of themselves on the way so far as ripening goes. And thanks for telling me about the gourds in the local shops. I'm so glad you mentioned the price, too, for I had been casting about in my mind as to how much I might offer for some big old ones a foot or two long, should I find any on Blythe's behalf. My friends haven't located any as yet but perhaps they may find some in the hills and if such be the case, I shall be glad to have the Manhattan price before I start dickering with the hill billies.

I haven't harvested all of the larger ones as yet but I suppose they will be ready in another week or so. It seems best to leave them on the vines until the vines wither and die, for in doing that, the vine seems to seal off any chance of the gourd itself getting soft.

I learned from Juanita today that Y. C., her son, and of course a former secretary, is in a Shreveport jail, facing 80 days in that institution. It develops that on Sunday he was arrested for speeding in his uncle's car. If they gave white folks such sentences, instead of 2 dollar fines, things might slow up a little, perhaps. Juanita said she had often cautioned Y. C. against speeding and if he felt he could take a chance that is alright and he can now take a chance on resting for 80 days as she isn't dreaming of paying any \$80.00 fine.

A billion other things to chat about, but my out-going mail to you today was so heavy, I had better stick to my policy of established length or you will be snowed under. Again my thanks for making me so happy with your elegant letter, and now I shall turn to the day's mail which I shall do with mighty uncertainty as to what questions were asked and what addresses are required, thanks to Irma....

6344

Wednesday, October <sup>14</sup>th, 1953.

Memorandum:

The marvelous weather continues and so does the watering of acres of gardens.

I find it so interesting that it is the Chinese magnolias which get less moisture at this season which put forth their flowers. Those within range of a hose retain their leaves, - as pretty a green as you could imagine, and hold back their buds for February blooming. I figure the others, feeling a touch of the drought, make a special effort to put forth their blossoms with a view of creating seed before their lives are extinguished. None of them are going to suffer such a fate but obviously they believe in trusting no weak points.

There was a letter today from a Mrs. Robert H. Johnson of Corvallis, Oregon asking for a Melrose Plantation plate. I suppose she must be some forgotten pilgrim but I can't remember anything about her, including her coloring, if any.

It is always gay to hear from Helen and apparently she, too, is finding her patience a little strained by the unpredictable doings of little Miss Ramsey. Surely, Carolyn should have written me following her initial contact with la Storm, but what Carolyn should do and what she does is, of course, two quite different things.

I can't recall if I got around to mention the death of Mrs. Fanny Hertzog Chopin Guillot last night. She died yesterday morning. She is Miss Sally's sister-in-law, for of all the twenty five children of Mathew Hertzog, only two reached maturity, - Miss Sally's husband and Miss Fanny. The latter has been mildly coo-coo for 10 or 15 years. She used to present quite a problem when visiting her old friend at Melrose along about 1946 or thereabouts. Somehow she had a perfect genius for hitting on a day when senility was paramount, and trying to untangle the snarls the two ladies could get themselves into was often something of a chore. Her funeral was held this morning



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and as the ladies across the fence attended the services in town,  
I did not see them at the coffee hour.

I did a bit of reading last night, finishing my favorite  
autobiography, --"The World of Yesterday". It is good to re-  
read it once in a while, for I forget this or that point in the  
times between. A publisher's note remarks that Zweig believed  
that everyone should keep a Journal for even the most prosaic  
lives have episodes in them that will be of interest to those  
coming after. The publisher didn't seem to endorse this concept  
but I am inclined to go along with Mr. Z.

Your friend, A. Scourby, Esquire, reads the autobiography, and  
it was pleasant to run into his voice on the next book I  
selected to run through. It is entitled "Journey to Persia" by  
Robert Payne, or some such name and although I read but a  
couple of pages, I got the impression it is contrived somewhat  
in the manner of "Rome and a Villa" although not quite so colorful.  
As an impressionist sort of thing, however, I find it sufficiently  
entertaining to read through to the end, although I suppose  
I should find Sears Roebuck or the Manhattan Telephone Book entranci  
to listen to, --if read by your friend, his voice is so wonderful.

Another death of the river today was Mrs. Guy Cloutier. She  
was a sister of Alphonse Prudhomme of Oakland and a daughter in law  
of Mrs. Adeline Cloutier of Oaklawn. She leaves six children,  
two married, two in college and the 5th and 6th are around  
12 or 14 years old.

Mrs. Wood telephoned me today, saying that two people in  
town had pointed out to her that Cane River doesn't really make  
such a perfect curve as to encircle the inner rim of the Joyous  
Coast plate, as indicated in that composition... Imagine.  
I told her to get in touch with her informants and tell em  
to return their plates to me and that I would be glad to exchange  
them for a photograph of the river which they might like to  
hang on their walls instead of the porcelain. Somehow it  
reminded me of Clemence's best picture, --the one in the African  
House done after the manner of Theodore Rousseau, at the first sight  
of which some dumb bunny declared: "I can't see anything in  
that picture, ---there are five wheels on the baby carriage."

So much for Art appreciation on Cane River, less Art,  
less History, --more precision.....

6346

6346

Thursday, October 15th, 1953.

Memorandum:

The marvelous weather still holds, with everything  
dry-dry but the temperature wonderful.

I didn't realize until today what a magnet the  
hoop-la being stages in New Orleans for Saturday would be.  
Today's pilgrims were all heading in that direction, --  
people from Montana, South Dakota, Missouri, Iowa and Illinois.  
They were all pretty nice people, too, and yet I wonder  
how so many husbands and wives can pull up in October  
and head out from such remote situations to have a  
fling at Saturday's Louisiana Purchase doings.

Interruptions have been so castant that I have mis-  
place a note from Robina which I wanted to much to send  
along to you. Perhaps I shall find it, and if so, I  
shall enclose it. But on the chance that I may not  
track it down before tomorrow's mail, I shall  
mention that I was quite taken aback to learn that she  
and Nell Fish have sold their business and are giving up  
possession as of the 16th, I believe she said. I under-  
stand her heart began doing things again and selling  
out seemed the wisest thing. She recalled that her  
home address is 825 and one half Wilkinson Street,  
Shreveport, La.

I haven't the vaguest notion as to what her  
financial status is but let us hope it is  
adequate to provide for permanent retirement without  
any wiffness odd the half dozen other letters in today's  
post which were of no account are sitting in plain sight  
while the single paragraph one from Robina insists on  
hiding, but I believe I covered everything she said  
in the above reference to it.

It appears to me the State Department has messed up the  
Friste business and in view of the Democratic representative  
being elected from a Republican stronghold for the first time



3143

6347

in Wisconsin the other day, I have been thinking about some of the ineptness of the present Administration. It all boils down to something like this:

Government is an Art, Business is a Science.  
The Republicans seem to have a fixation on the misconceived notion that, as Cobble and Hoover have stated, Government is Business, which it most certainly is not.

For the most part, the Democrats of this century seem to have been greater artists in the Art of governing than the Republicans, might few of whom have manifested any Art in the manipulation of that line of endeavor. The Republican Administration, laboring under the illusion the country should be run, not as a group of people but as a business, proceeded to put Big Business to Big Money in all the key posts. These big shots seem to think the debit and credit ledgers of government should reveal financial profit or loss but preferably profit so that all the gravy could somehow flow in their direction, with the average citizen benefiting eventually when the gravy has trickled down after their own gravy bowls have been filled to over flowing. Try, as they may, and even as honestly as they might, they can't make it work because they are trying to make business methods fit governing methods and since the two things are quite different entities, they are getting along fairly badly and, I fear, lack the sense to know why. All of this, of course, is old stuff, but I repeat it again in sheer wonder that people who are so smart in one line of endeavor can be so dumb in another. A classic example of business versus government comes to mind in the case of Henry Ford. I remember at the inception of the Roosevelt Administration when W.P.A. was being considered, Henry Ford, as an industrialist, was called to give his opinions to a congressional committee and he forthwith proved that if the Government should borrow one billion dollars for Public Works, it would simply go bankrupt, the Government bankrupt by expending a single billion on public improvements. There, indeed, was the business mind, -- the authority on business, demonstrating beautifully how little he understood any of it.

The ladies next door are still going to morning funerals, I haven't seen them in days. One of Miss Fanny's sons would not go to her funeral but participated in a parade in the afternoon.

6143

6348

Friday, October 16th, 1953.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Sunday's elegant epistle in today's post.

And may I thank you for the many points on which you took the trouble to set me straight, points about which I had inquired, in some instances, and others about which I had not inquired, not knowing that some things had transpired at all.

Your splendid account of how East and West Berlin zones are maintained settled a matter about which I had long wondered. That a permit should be required before anyone can hope to transport goods from one sector to another of course accounts for the mass migrations of empty handed people. What a topsyturvy situation all that must be.

And may I thank you for telling me about Herr Feuchwangler, his honors and his present place of residence. If Carolyn ever writes again, I shall "sick her" on to him, and I shall take occasion to mention his presence at Pacific Palisades to la Storm on the theory she might like to contact him. I'm so sorry Herr Zweig committed suicide, for it would be nice to think of him today at Pacific Palisades or some such pleasant situation.

And may I thank you for sending along the clipping about impending doings in New Orleans. Oddly enough, about two minutes after I had read your letter, a telephone call came through from the Consulate, asking for elaboration on my last letter regarding the Natchitoches business. I gathered from the conversation that plans for the two days following the big scenes in New Orleans were still being formulated and that the Ambassador, Mayor of Orleans and so on might journey along Cane River on their way back toward Washington. I asked to be advised in advance so I might round up a suitable phalanx in Natchitoches to



8160

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do the honors, following the visit at Melrose. I am to be advised by telephone or wire on the morrow. Apparently that matter about which I have spoken so much is still "cooking".

You asked about the animals. I think I have mentioned them recently. Grandpa seems entranced to have a couple of boy friend for playmates, and they play all day, --he and Inner and Outer Mongolia, and all three are as fat as butter balls.

Just after Frank Edwards had tuned off last night, I heard a familiar honking and from the front gallery, facing the moon, I could see endless columns cutting shadows across the big old silver disk. These were the first geese of the 1953 Southern migration that I have heard and they obviously are paying no attention to local weather predictions of "continued fair and warm", but are well on their way to their winter home before Jack Frost as made up his mind. I haven't been listening to W H O, Des Moines lately. Usually that station on riday nights gives full particulars about migratory movements up and down the Missouri.

interruption: -

Hummmmm.....The telephone just rang. Again it was Irma, and for the life of me I couldn't tell which one it was. But this time it was the other one. I found that out when she said she wanted to come "up" in the morning to bring a couple of friends. I don't like the idea but I guess I ought to be able to stand it if others can take the risk. The true is, of course, that one of the others is dying to establish a contact with the rival that would result in a "bust up", and that is one scuffle to which I should not care to be a party.

I am so glad you told me about the Life article on Mississippi's most eminent contemporary writer. As you predicted, too, Sir Winston received the Noble prize, which seems to me to be just. I want to talk about his Memoires one of these evenings. So much to talk about....

1260

P.S. - saw Madam Regard alone Saturday and gave her your message. She was delighted, naturally.

Also, -- the pecane advertisement in the Times will be on November 8th.

6350

Sunday, October 18th, 1953.

#### Memorandum:

How nice to find your Tuesday message in Saturday's post. How pleasant it is to know that all roads are clear and no shadows be-cloud the communication channels.

And may I thank you for telling me all the interesting things you had to share. I am always glad to learn of likely radio programs, too. I had stumbled over the David Ross half hour on Sunday night and loved it but I had not be so lucky in the matter of the Theatre Royal and shall start casting about for it tonight. I should so much have enjoyed the Gogol Overcoat. I don't know much about that author but should like to become better acquainted with him. Every once in a while I like to re-read his "Dead Souls" which is certainly a colorful picture of 19th century middle class life in Russia and I often think of his lines about the troyka these days when Russia seems to be crashing through international highways, even as Gogol predicted in his opus.

I don't seem to know much about the man himself, although I am under the impression he was a very lonely soul and that his life, both inside and outside his native country, was remarkably solitary.

And speaking of Gogol reminds me that in his autobiography, Zweig mentions having done a study of Dostievski and the mere mention of it made me want to read it for, as you know, I greatly admire that gentleman's handiwork. Zweig also somewhat casually tucked in a phrase concerning his Erasmus that gave me pause, for he suggested that this study of Erasmus was in some way a self portrait of his own mind which ought to make the reading of the book doubly interesting.



6351

Dr. John Kyser telephoned me last night to invite me to accompany him today to Shreveport to attend a meeting of the Historical Society. Perhaps one reason why he wanted me to attend was because he had hoped that the Society might extend an invitation to the Texas Society to meet jointly in the Spring to discuss plans for pushing the two states of Texas and Louisiana into doing something heroic about the San Antonio-Natchitoches-Natchez Trace. I decided during our conversation that I would invite them to hold one of their sessions here and I think I can bring quite a lot to bear on whatever program we may formulate for joint State action. With Roan as Chairman of the Natchez Trace thing in Mississippi where millions have been devoted to the development of that section of the Trace, I think I can readily bring up some of the larger siege guns to play on the point. As I understand it, the Natchez Trace was a more or less complete unit running from Natchez to some place in Tennessee and, quite apart from it, the San Antonio Trail was at the same time a complete unit stretching from Mexico City to Natchitoches. This was the colonial aspect of the two highways and a third came into being when economic and political considerations eventually emerged which seemed to make joining these two thoroughfares together, the result being the Natchez-Natchitoches Trace or Trail or Road or whatever.

Dr. Kyser seemed disappointed that I declined his invitation to accompany him to the Shreveport meeting but altogether entranced at the aspect of things for the season ahead, the conclave suggested for Melrose, the enlisting of political forces in two States to back up the project, --friends in Austin pushing the Texas big wigs and through Ora, who is a friend of the Louisiana Governor's sister, lining up such powers with Roan to lay down a barrage and a pattern as already demonstrated in Mississippi as to what can be done if the thing is really backed up by public interest and political pressure. Well, we shall see.

Rosalind Aswell came to spend this afternoon with me. Jimmy is in the Shreveport hospital suffering from pleurisy, stemming from his broken ribs. She spoke of her studies in Vienna in the 1920's, Lehar's interest in her and her little boy, - Douglas (Melvin) Jr., etc., etc. She came depressed but departed rather happier, I think, and pilgrims demanding some of my time gave her a chance to relax.

6352

Monday, October 19th, 1953.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Wednesday letter in today's post.

I'm so glad you find the finished Joyous Coast items look alright, and I appreciate your thoughtfulness in telling me how neatly little Lestan's spelling came through. Probably nobody will ever notice it and you may be sure I haven't bothered to call anybody's attention to it.

This machine, or rather the ribbon has been kicking up a bit, so if a big void suddenly develops, don't be surprised. I shall try to find somebody to change the ribbon within the next day or so.

Before it fades out, --I hope, - let me hasten to say that the November 8th day for the pecan notice in The Times has been altered. Now it would appear it will not make it before the 20th, which, to my way of thinking, will make it too late, but that is merely an opinion. I shall give you a definite date, when it comes to hand but I think the 20th is correct, --20th of November, of course.

The enclosures speak for themselves and say little. Apparently Caroline feels bound to see the Kleisers or she wouldn't have written the note. I believe you saw my last letter to her. It must be admitted her response was comparatively brief in contrast thereof, which is perfectly alright. I shall write her tonight, assuring her that I shall pass her message along to the Kleisers.

I believe I neglected to say in yesterday's note that Saturday morning's tour for la Montespan and friends went off smoothly. J. H.'s luck held throughout. Celeste left at 7 o'clock for a day of shopping in Alexandria. I told him at 8 of the impending visit. He appeared annoyed and said he would see nobody as he



8260

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would be in town on business. I was but mildly surprised on reaching Yucca with the tourists to find him on the gallery bearing whiskey of which he never takes any and for which I always give way to wine whenever possible. The ladies, however, indulged in the gift package.

But speaking of one thing or another, this reminds me that you are being honored with another visit and may it not be to whirly-gig. Surely you should be permitted to catch your breath between times, and I suppose Thanksgiving day will be a holiday and an excuse for student frolics in the great city, --I hope not.

And may I thank you for mentioning photographs. It would be nice to be able to send a few now and then but as I have been conserving them of late, I shall have to turn through them to see which are in ample stock and which aren't and, if I may, I shall advise accordingly. It is so kind of you to think of all these things.

I am a little non-plused by the sight of a couple of things Mary Pringle has done with milk glass and her potter's wheel which Dr. Rand urged her to acquire and work. If this ex-school teacher has contrived the things which have been shown me, she is altogether deft in her first attempts. I wrote her to ask if she would like to attempt the African House as a toy bank, even though Rudolph explained that wouldn't be functional. She says she thinks she can do it. I shall be interested to see. For if a model can be turned out, I might be able to get Rock Hall to give me a quotation, --Rock Hall or some such house. I think the thing couldn't be sold in quantity but it probably might enjoy some popularity locally and is accordingly worth seeing so far as the model is concerned.

I finished "Journey to Persia" and liked all of it. I was gently floored by one word and am still wondering if an error could have been made. Referring to an ancient building of huge wooden pillars, the archiologist remarked that before long it would undoubtedly become the prey of the boll weevil. The word appeared twice, and of course I assumed that in Persia as else where it was the termite that caused such havoc.

It has been a nice day because the weather continues fine as a setting and best of all your nice letter.....

8260

6354

Tuesday, October 20th, 1953.

Memorandum:

How nice to find not one but two envelopes in a familiar hand today.

And may I say how fervently I am holding the thought that you may not be too bogged down by visitors or at least a visitor during his stay.

It was so thoughtful of you to send along the clipping. I enjoyed it so much. I may have mentioned before that Dr. Carman, one of the best minds I ever knew, was denied membership on various international conferences, including the Versailles one simply and soely because, poor nobdy had ever taught him table manners. I'm glad I don't have to deny assistance from local associates because of that particular reason.

And may I thank you on J. H.'s behalf for having sent along the advertisement concerning pecanes. I did not see him at supper but shall run into him in his office on the morrow and I know he will be appreciative of your thoughtfulness. I know not if we do business with that San Antonio concern. "Long John", a 6 foot 6 inch raw boned Texas number who has purchased and hauled pecanes from here to there for years was here for dinner the other day, ostensibly buying the pre-crop gatherings which are never very much. I must ask if he is with that outfit.

I am so glad the air mail came through nicely. It is odd that the enclosures came through before the memos did, for both envelopes were mailed at the same time. I trust that both eventually reached your true hand, and I am still wondering what happened to that missing page from sometime last Spring.

I just discover I seem to have stirred up a curious margin on this side of the sheet. I shall elongate the paragraphs a bit on the reverse.



1860

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The only drawback about doing business on a shoe string is that one seldom gets further than the length of same. But it's more fun doing something ~~xxx~~ than nothing and so I wrote a letter to Mary Pringle, outlining an idea which, if carried out at all, --although I didn't tell her so, - requires an initial undertaking on her part.

I was so impressed by the work she has recently done with her potter's wheel that I thought she might be willing to stir up a sample for me that might eventually be productive of interest, with Mary sharing whatever small income might accrue.

What I have in mind, --of all things, is a paper weight in the form of a boll of cotton, made out of something or other resembling milk glass. At least the color of milk glass and cotton might have some suggestive quality, - the one for the other. I don't know if she is capable of making such a thing, and I shall want to see her in carrying out the general design. Then, if she can make a few of them, I could send one to Rock Hall, as mentioned yesterday, and after getting a quantity price, offer it to the Cotton Council with the recommendation that they buy hundreds or thousands of them as gifts to Editors, Radio Commentators, Teachers, large store buyers, and so on, --a milk glass paper weight for their respective desks being a constant reminder of the South's staple. This might be too subtle for the Council to comprehend or approve. That is one chance to be taken. My idea would be to place one of the hand made ones on J. H.'s desk when he is out and leave it there for two or three days. J. H. Williams is also a member of the Council, and I could get Ora to "plant" one on his desk. Then, before the meeting of the Council in Miami in January, see to it that all the other members receive one. Thus each member would be acquainted with the item and, being familiar with it, might react favorably to the suggestion that the Council invest in scads of them as a permanent gift to various people in the country who might be influenced by association, and, in the mean time, I shall have rounded up prices on quantity production, so the matter could be pushed forward or dropped like a hot potato. It is for Mary to decide if she wants to fiddle with the initial model. I hope this all is fair and not too crack-pot. Don't you think a cotton boll paper weight would be nice....

1860

6356

Wednesday, October 21st, 1953.

Memorandum:

A busy day, lovely and warm and tremendously dusty, or perhaps the latter is only part of the haze that may in part be due to the 50 forest fires said to be going at the moment.

"Davenport is the name" a husky Texan announced along about 10 o'clock this morning on my gallery. "I told my wife you would remember our tour here three years ago."

Imagine.

But, in spite of the Texas breeze, they turned out to be very pleasant people and as they are searching about Natchitoches for a house to buy, they will eventually be Parish neighbors, I suppose, and they have already begun planning dinner parties in my honor.

Imagine that, too, if you can, - with a straight face.

A telephone call from Mrs. Peyton Cunningham, grand daughter of Pierre Emanuel, or perhaps Great Granddaughter, voiced her appreciation over the Joyous Coast plate. She told me something I thought quite interesting, in view of the fact that the Ambassador apparently hasn't made it up this way, --she said that several of the old families of the Parish had taken up the matter of the representative of Natchitoches Parish which had its meeting three weeks ago with a view of sending someone to New Orleans for last Saturday's hoop-la. It seems, --and this seems incredible, that Lestan was the person of their choice and that the State Representative and Senators from this area concurred but that there was a lot of behind the scenes business started up by one single family and as the wife was determined to be the Natchitoches representative, --the wife of a prominent planter living awfully near Beaufort, the mistress of the latter place was substituted for the original person selected. It seems to me this is as it should be, so far as choice is concerned, for after all, Lestan is a mighty new comer and Beth has a lot of ancient Natchitoches blood in her veins. And another point to be considered is the fact that Lestan seems to get along alright with everybody, old and



6357

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while Adam Leaufort gets on with nobody, ancient or modern, and since there would probably have been much regret expressed by some people, no matter which individual was chosen, it is better all around that somebody fairly unpopular was selected. Besides, even as I can't work up much enthusiasm about going to Natchitoches for dinner, so neither, one conclude, would Leston care much about heading out for the Crescent City. None of this is of the slightest interest, particularly in view of the fact that the celebration of Saturday last past is as dead as last year's door nail, but I pass it along regardless to keep you abreast of non-consequential insignificances on the local scene.

Last night I finally got the records in proper sequence in "Brain Surgeon" by William Sharp (Viking) and now, at long last, I am beginning at the beginning, which I may say so, is not a bad way to begin any book. I like it very much and the references to F. D. R. and to spouse of same, although brief, are all on our side. As no book can be printed without error, it would seem, I take it one such appears in a paragraph referring to racial discrimination of a train at "Meridian, Louisiana" which surely must mean Mississippi. As this book was published in 1952, I assume the author may still be living.

Charles Cunningham telephoned today to ask if he might use some of the material in the Golden Anniversary issue in the forth-coming program for this year's Christmas Festival in town. Naturally, I said he could use anything he wanted to.

Juanita's wandering boy, Y. C. got out of the Shreveport Jail, - I know not who paid his fine, and he returned here to help pick cotton today. That will not last long but Juanita is happy while it does.

A letter from Mary Pringle indicates she is coming up with her sister and Blythe on Friday. I shall write her tonight, asking that she try to avoid mentioning cotton bolls to at least one of her companions for I should like to "plant" the paper weights a few days on the desks of at least two members of the Cotton Council before releasing the idea. So things turn and may I do better on the morrow.....

6358

6358

Tuesday, October 22nd, 1953.

Memorandum:

We are promised "widely scattered showers" for the morrow, and if the promise is kept, the sensation will seem novel enough.

It will contribute nothing to harvesting of the cotton which even under favorable weather conditions will probably run into December. But a few drops of rain and the pecaness will start cascading and cotton will accordingly have to take a back seat for a while.

In spite of a fairly busy day with people, I did get some mail read and I shall either enclose some or send some under separate cover, although none of it is of great moment. I think you will find some items interesting, however, such as the ones from Hollywood and Pacific Palisades. I think you will agree the Hollywood one is splendidly contrived for the type of travelogue it is intended to be. I have forgotten its date and may have been written shortly after the ladies reached their destination. It is interesting that it doesn't mention Miss Ramsey. Caroline or Carolyn's is interesting primarily for what she does have to say about the ladies. Apparently they are hitting it off alright. I must say I was mildly surprised that Kay and Aunt Willie passed up Briarwood. That no doubt accounts for Caroline D.'s failure to mention them. I am glad I skipped mention of their visit, too. Until today's news concerning the journey, I had assumed they had gone a couple of hundred miles out of their way to stop at Briarwood and at this bend of the river, but as Briarwood was by-passed, it appears I was quite wrong. Now I regret that I didn't be-stir myself to do something about supper but they were hours late in arriving and I was under the impression they would try to make Briarwood before it was too late. It seems to me I did give them coffee or some such and I hope they didn't find me too inhospitable.

And having reached this point, guests appeared, having negotiated the garden readily enough, thanks to the big moon.



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They were from the Chamber of Commerce. I had promised to help do a bit of editing of the material going into this year's Festival Program which in part will incorporate much of the material employed in the Natchitoches Times special number of last March or whenever. I had expected to do this at the close of day but not well into the night, but the weather being pleasant and a pressure for copy stemming from the printer, tonight seemed the magical moment.

This afternoon I was altogether delighted at a bit of medical advice proffered gratis by Clemence to a California pilgrim who chanced to be here when Clemence streaked through the garden. The man was perspiring freely, and as he mopped his brow, remarked that he wished he knew what would lessen that tendency to ooze so copiously whereupon Clemence, with a view to helping the gentleman, told him the guaranteed method to eradicate it. She said it was simple, --merely put some water in a basin and set same under the bed before folding up. Do this for 9 consecutive nights, leaving the same water in the basin, but removing basin each morning to a dark corner in the room, returning it each night, and on the 10th day you won't be a sweatin' no more. Of course the man was enchanted and Clemence departed, delighted that she had helped the poor gentleman to solve his problem. Clemence, if you don't mind, is a sight.

A long letter from Mrs. Stirling, containing so many questions that I shall have to retain it for reference in making a series of responses, also contains a clipping she asks me to return. It had to do with Lois Lester speaking before a Farm and Home gathering at L. S. U., and although Mrs. Stirling is very careful in the choice of her words, one concludes that in reality it was Lois who was the prime mover in keeping the Oakley pot boiling. Mrs. Stirling also reports that the nieces of Lucy Mathews offered the State first choice in purchasing a block of furnishings from Oakley but the State declined to bid although it is expending money to buy furnishings. In the lot offered were silver knives, forks and spoons belovew and marked with the Pirie initials, and a silver cup bearing the name of the beautiful Eliza. Odd the State wasn't interested in these items for Oakley. Do you reckon perhaps then never heard of the Pories. So many things to go into but I had better forld for this sitting.....

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Friday, October 23rd, 1953.

Memorandum:

I think I have the date correct, although the Pringle-Rand contingent didn't appear and as they had written they would be here on "Friday, the 24th", perhaps my calendar is wrong or they are carumba..

The promised rain of yesterday never arrived here although Fort Worth got an inch and a quarter and the clouds have kept the thermometer down to the 80's, and I suppose we may or may not get a sprinkle tonight or tomorrow.

My telephone rang before 9 this morning, the operator announcing that Alexandria was calling. Then came a voice:

"This is Irma....."

It put me in mind of other telephone calls and other appearances unexpected, on my gallery. Little Miss Somperyac Willard wanted to know if she could spend the afternoon with me. She could not, since the Pringle-Rand posse were anticipated. She asked for Saturday. That was out, too. How about Monday. That would be fine, --and after I put the receiver back on the instrument, I found myself hoping that Robina wouldn't select Monday as a magical day to spend here.

And then the telephone rang again and it was Long Distance, -- William Hughes of Little Rock, Arkansas, asking if he and his wife could come on Sunday. I told him I believed we were scheduled for rain. They didn't care. Sunday is such a busy day. But if it is worth their while to travel from there to here in a rain to spend an afternoon, that is just fine.

Half the world, --perhaps across the fence, too, will be journey to Shreveport to the State Fair, I imagine, which will be just fine, so far as I am concerned, but the killing part of it is that half the travelers from South Louisiana will be stopping off here. Frankly, I contemplate Sunday and Monday with scant enthusiasm.

I got into another tangle when Dr. and Mrs. Joel Fletcher from Lafayette appeared on the gallery about 2 o'clock. They stopped



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just long enough to say Howdy and to present me with a huge slab of university manufactured American cheese. I suggested they not rush on but linger a few moments for I expected Blythe to appear at any moment. They said they had to make Shreveport in a hurry and couldn't wait but if I would be so kind as to hand her a package on their behalf, they would be entranced. They had intended stopping in Alexandria on their way North but had gone by some other route. I, foolish me, said I would be entranced to pass the thing along for them. And then Blythe never showed up and I am left holding the package. What a hurly-burly.

Between the two telephones this morning, the master appeared at Yucca. He explained the lady across the fence was very nervous and would I see if I could do something. I would. And so there was a dab of saline solution with the coffee and my shoulder was pretty damp before I got out. Everything is upside down primarily, it would seem, because the gas stove tends to put out more heat than is expected when using the oven. How one has the nerve to sport such luxuries as are set forth for such a reason, I cannot imagine. Come to think of it there was another nerve racking experience for the lady, --somebody simply had to straighten the top drawer of the desk in the living room where several addresses had been placed in no kind of order at all. You can readily envision how horrible life can be. Between sobs, I was asked if I never had anything to worry or disturb me and I explained that I supposed everyone has some but that mine were always minor matters. A couple of servants were tip-toeing around and poor Madam Regard's hands were shaking like leaves in a winter's blast. From the clerk I learn there was a long session at the gaming table last night in town and I suppose this may actually be an act put on by the wife to reprove the husband for staying out late. What a pity she can't concentrate her tears on him. But since he never objects to her weekly devotion to the gaming table, she really can't complain too much on that score, hence the indication, I suppose. At best it is tiresome witnessing and must be lily so reading about.

And so we head into another week end. Perhaps the rains will keep down the flow of pilgrims and the clouds somehow convey shafts of sunshine across the fence. As for myself, I have a stack of letters to write and I should like to read a bit, too, but reckon I will make but modest strides. Do hope there's peace at Lyme....

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Sunday, October 25th, 1953.

Memorandum:

It's rather late and if this note trails off into nothingness, just charge it off to sleepiness.

The promise of rain never did develop but since Texas has been getting bountiful supplies of moisture during the past three days, I reckon it will eventually reach us.

The Little Rock people, Mr. and Mrs. Hughes, arrived on schedule, - 12:10 this noon and departed about ten minutes ago, --my clock points to 11:05, so you may imagine I have had quite a prolonged session.

I was sorry to learn by Saturday's post that Mary Pringle had had to forego her "Friday, the 24th" visit because her 87 year old father had just been whisked away to the hospital with double pneumonia. I shall send Blythe the package which the Fletchers left with me for Friday delivery, for there's no telling when one may or may not see a Rand.

This morning pilgrims appeared from Amarillo, Texas, but I gave them only a quick go-round as I was determined to hear the Invitation to Learning and what would be said about the Cicero orations. Picture my disappointment when at 10:30 it was announced the program hour had been changed to 12:05. Somehow Columbia seems to jockey that program into hours that never suit me, for we dine at 11:30 across the fence and I am never back to home base before 12:40.

But Celeste and J. H. were "studying about" going to the Shreveport Fair this afternoon and we accordingly dined a little earlier than customary and I was back home by 12:05 in time to hear the opening announcement when, precisely at that moment, a tap on the door indicated the arrival of the Hughes contingent.

They are congenial people and it was good to be with them but so many people passed this way during the afternoon who had to be given considerations, -- friends of this or that



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Henry, business associates and personal friends, that I never real did get a chance to catch my breath, and could only scurry away for a little while to give Madam Regard a little attention, and then fly back to my guests.

Lots of pictures were taken and some of them, I think, may turn out to be interesting. Little Rock brought tons of equipment including enormous flood light contraptions which illuminated the gardens like day. I wonder what colored neighbors for miles may have thought was going on. Just another atom, I suppose, and turned over and went back to sleep.

I learned something hilarious on Saturday when Mrs. Coombs passed this way to call on me with information concerning reading machine potentials which she learned while attending a Welfare Conference in Baton Rouge last week. She learned from the assistant director of the State office that some years back quite a buzzing went on in Baton Rouge as to my racial status, one side maintaining that my letters revealed me to be white while the other faction pointed to my card in the State Welfare files covering Reading machines, that I was a negro. Don't you love that. Of course I was perfectly delighted at my unexpected classification. The assistant director told Mrs. Coombs that for no apparent reason the subject took on an unwarranted interest and finally when Dr. Aycock had to make a visit to Shreveport on professional duties, it was decided, after some persuasion on the part of the factions, that he would stop off at Melrose and learning first hand, settle the matter once and for all for the home office. Picture the disappointment of half of them when on his return, the Lestan card had to be changed, the word "colored" replaced by that of "white".

Somehow this recalls to mind the firm belief of Miss Kate Davis of Natchez that Miss Cammie was a niece of that distinguished cane river mulatto, Madam Aubin Roque and therefore a direct descendant of Grandpere and Marie Therese, etc.

One naturally wonders how I was designated a negro on the original card in the Baton Rouge file. I can't imagine, although there was a mulatto, Dubreuil, of Melrose, possessed of a reading machine about the time I acquired one, and perhaps Baton Rouge assumed that everyone in the Melrose area was colored. I giggle in my beard at the thought of how much fun Lyle would have had with all this inconsequential business.

And now I must call it a day for tomorrow will probably be fairly busy and frankly, I'm sleepy. Do hope your week end gave you a bre thing space.....

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Monday, October 26th, 1953.

Memorandum:

Lo! an inch and a half of rain fell between 2 and 5 this morning.

I was so sleepy when I finally got to bed last night, however, that I didn't realize the blessings cascading from on high until I awoke an hour before dawn.

And with the morn, the clouds evaporated and the balance of the day was all sunshine.

And it was busy, too, although not quite so continuous as yesterday.

What did my heart the most good was a couple of pilgrims from Dallas, a Mr. and Mrs. Rankin or Renkin or some such. They are rather 60ish, and he is probably a retired oil magnet or ranch owner or some such, a business man who has probably never gotten around to let his keen mind wander much from business. Mrs. Renkin had had a chance to dabble in the written word down the years and had read Saron, Kane and so on.

They were heading toward New Iberia and thence to the coast where they planned buying a place where they could go occasionally and contemplate the Gulf, fish if so inclined and generally loll.

After we had brushed Plantation Parade aside, the thermometer of enthusiasm began to rise, and it mounted progressively as the tour advanced, --the big house, the Audio, the African House, Yucca.

The latter entranced Mr. R. He was so fascinated by Grandpere's grandfather clock he asked me if he might borrow a chair to stand up and peep at the works from the little side door. He was delighted. He described the various types of things he saw and could date them from the 18th century. He said he knew little about anything but business except for clocks of which he had made a specialty. He said the clock was of the greatest merit. I told him it was in Grandpere's inventory at \$5.00. He said at the very least, quite aside from its historical virtues, it was worth a thousand, and never to sell it as long as I could hold on to it.

I told them that frankly, I was preseed for time and that they must come back. They said they should so much like to. And then



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to his wife he said:

"This first stop on a Louisiana plantation just finishes the trip so far as I am concerned. We will go on and carry through our program but if we had never gone farther than Melrose, that would have made the whole venture worth while."

I always consider the pleasure afforded people of this type, especially people with a soul which has never had an opportunity to explore the highways and byways, the best investment of my time. Like Mr. Wordsworth's daffodils, Melrose will often remain to afford solace and pleasure to Mr. R.

La Williard arrived just as the Renkins were departing and as we exchanged Howdies, J. H. appeared with two Indonesians, whom he presented to turned over for dinner, along with Dr. Curtis of L. S. U. These two dark gentlemen are among fourteen in this country, observing various economic and agrarian customs with a view to introducing them into those fabulous islands off somewhere between Asia and Australia. The table talk was good and Juanita was enthralled by the appearance of two gentlemen at table, --two gentlemen of color almost as dark as her own in company with a white lady and gentlemen. Her delight, although perfectly concealed, was in the fezes they wore throughout the meal. Their conversation was carried on in flawless English, which is doubly impressive, since most of the school in Java whence they came were Dutch, I believe.

Dr. Curtis and his friends over the coffee cups confided that J. H. had showed them a couple of strange buildings behind the big house but that he had traveled so fast they couldn't comprehend what were all about, although they were intrigued by their appearance. We had another tour and they seemed to enjoy it.

After they had departed, I took La Williard to Clemence's house. She, in overalls, was picking pecanes behind the bamboo beyond the white garden, and seeing us, came to dispense hospitality. Irma was entranced with what she saw and promptly brought three. I was amused to note that the plates in the Cane River series are infl the Hunter endeavors. Her color work is quite nice and at long last she has struck on what I have been trying to jockey her into do including local houses of distinct architectural design in her creat. After Clemence's, we tried to call on Alton Johnson, the wood carver but last night's rain had bogged down the roads too much and we shall that again sometime. By 6, little Miss Williard was on her way to Baton Rouge, guests having arrived for supper and time for me search in vain for secretaries. Thus spun the day and may tomorrow be as satisfying.....

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Tuesday, October 26th, 1953.

Memorandum:

A cloudless day but cool in the mid 60's.

40-50,000 lbs. pecan. Tomorrow they resume picking cotton but yesterday and today they did well with their pecane gathering, perhaps forty or fifty thousand pounds. I believe the point is to let those remaining on the trees "stay put" until a later rain, wind or cold snap sends them tumbling,-- probably several hundred thousand pounds.

The latest word on the Times advertisement is that it will appear on the 8th of November. Big old trucks have been whisking them away to Dallas, St. Louis and so on during the past couple of days. It is wonderful to see how many are in, knowing as one does that it is only a fraction of the crop.

I guess all the secretaries got lost in the scuffle which doesn't bother me in the least as the mail thus far this week appears to be from sources of scant importance.

A while back you were so thoughtful as to mention additional prints. I think one picture the Hughes Sunday visit brought forth will perhaps carry a lay-out that may be worth reproducing. I suppose it may come to hand in a week or tend days and if so, and it proves to be any good, I'll send it along. When it does go to the photographers, I would be glad to have a couple of Lestan, taken in Paris in gray trousers, --the one with the head turned side ways. I had in mind sending one to Dora and perhaps one to La Storm later.

The one taken by Mr. Hughes was taken inside the African looking toward the plantation desk, the Cane River plates in the background on the wall. Lestan is doing a bit of desk work and Grandpa is lending a hand at the book-keeping. It's probably a sight but it may turn out hilarious.

Much of the table talk at the moment is the



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stockmen's cavalcade to Washington in an effort to get a price guarantee on cattle prices. Everyone thinks Secretary Benson is right in refusing J. H. says he is perfectly right although he assumes that sooner or later Benson will have to withdraw from the Cabinet. Last night I heard the newspaper man from St. Louis, --Brandt or some such name, a fairly correct statement on other aspects of the Government to wit, that the Democratic Administration was made up primarily of politicians and professors who discussed moves in advance to give public opinion an opportunity to make itself heard whereas in contrast, the present Republican Administration, made up primarily of military and business men, effect their policies before they are announced, thereby obviating any discussion until after the fact has been accomplished.

Celeste saw Madam Beaufort in town on Saturday. She told Celeste she found her Joyous Coast plate so divine she didn't bother to acknowledge it but decided to put off mentioning it until she could come down and talk about it. That's about the thinnest alibi I have heard thus far.

You may notice the name of Father Digby of Louisiana in the papers shortly, for I understand he has just received a summons from the McCarthy committee. He has addressed the Welfare Conventions here in years gone by and has pointed out that with all the riches God bestowed on this world, there was no excuse for the enormous concentration of wealth in the hands of a few and such abject poverty as the lot for others. I chanced to hear him over the W W L (Columbia) station of the Roosevelt Hotel in New Orleans last week when he took occasion to describe the outrageous poverty obtaining in the homes controlled by the great moneyed interests, mostly banks, controlling the vast sugar industry in Louisiana. I suppose some of the bankers complained about him to Wisconsin Joe and now we shall see what, if anything, comes of it. Perhaps McCarthy as a Catholic, has sufficient influence with the Church to have Father Digby unfrocked, but it is doubtful if even the Senator has the strength to silence Father Digby, although McCarthy may in all probability get all the headlines while Digby will only get the sack.

Tomorrow is beauty parlor day what with the ladies studying about going to Mansura for a prolonged week end, --All Saints' and so on. It's all so exciting, especially on the Montespan

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Wednesday, October 28th, 1953.

Memorandum:

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Saturday letter in today's post and to learn that you are making it alright again.

To have had a cold on top of visitors is a little too much but it is heartening to know you have overcome the one, and by now, I hope, the other.

And may I thank you for having taken the trouble to provide me with the quotation from The Times. I want to read it over again, for I think it has provided me with an idea, --so many of my ideas stem from little Miss Lee, directly or indirectly, but I want to re-read it before I comment on it further.

hope you are having the same pretty weather we are enjoying, --cloudless and cool, with the effects of Monday's rain continuing to keep down the dust.

Ora came down this morning to have coffee with Celeste, Madam Regard and me. She had telephoned yesterday to ask about the possibility of buying some Hunter canvases. I told her I would take her to view the collection for herself. She has recently enclosed a gallery giving on the river in town, -- a room about the size of the back gallery at Yucca, I believe, and this she has converted into a dining room. Over her buffet, she has ranged the Cane River plates and after she had seen the lady doctor's framed Hunters, -- either in her office or her home, Ora decided she would like to use a couple in her new dining room. She found precisely what she wanted and Clemence was delighted to make the sale, and, as she told me later, -- Clemence, -- "I heads out for the store to gets some new shoes and a new rag to make me a pretty hat for winter".

Ora mentioned the wife of a merchant in town who has had



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a new bridge, recently set by a Shreveport dentist, come loose. She wrapped it in Kleenex and put it in her pocketbook and waited a couple of days before going to Shreveport until her daughter, suffering from hayfever, could make a trip to see her physician, so mother and daughter could both be worked on at the same time. On the way to Shreveport, the daughter was sneezing madly and her mother kept supplying her with fresh Kleenex, and finally throwing the whole gob out of the car window when it was used up. On reaching her dentist, she suddenly realized she had also thrown away her bridge, too, and so the appointment ended before it began and eventually mother and daughter headed toward home, determined to find evidences of the white Kleenex along the 75 or 80 mile highway. But of course they hadn't thought much about the harvest season and were accordingly distressed, on sighting something white along the shoulder of the road, only to discover it was cotton that had fallen off some trailer. Cotton abounds all the way from Shreveport to Hatchitoches and accordingly they stopped millions of times on seeing something white along the road. If they had saved each handful, they might have collected a ble, --but never did they discover the Kleenex containing the bridge.

This afternoon Mr. and Mrs. Stirling dropped in from St. Francisville. This was the first time I had met him and I thought him very pleasant. She wanted him to have a little look at things of which he has heard so much. They were a little pressed for time and so could not sit down for a chat. I should have liked to have them stay longer, but they wanted to make a 5 o'clock ferry across the Mississippi and so naturally I did not urge them to linger. When living in Manhattan, I discovered that some people always push courtesy for departing guests to the point of keeping them lingering long after the guest really wants to depart and ever since then I have always made it a point to provide wraps immediately when anyone makes a move toward the door. Some people are obviously ~~surpr~~ surprised at the alacrity on the part of their host in making it possible for them to leave as soon as any manifestation has been made in that direction, but endless au revoirs wear out everybody concerned, I think, and hence the dispatch with which I always endeavor to consummate the business.

You will enjoy Helen's letter for I can find it. I am not looking for week end company with enthusiasm, --it will take me years to get over Sunday's prolonged sitting, but I do think it would mean much to Helen and I shall transmit a green light, hoping the while that the holiday season impending may prevent her from making it now.....

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Thursday, October 29th, 1953.

Memorandum:

The lovely cool weather continues and the promise for the week end is the like pattern obtaining since Monday.

Dr. and Mrs. Knipmeyer passed this way as usual this morning and when, after a few minutes chat, he mentioned he saw a couple of ladies approaching, I moaned something about pilgrims and stepped to the gallery to investigate.

Picture my surprise in discovering them to be none other than Robina and Mrs. Nellie Regan, the latter the sister of Annie Gibson.

The ladies were as surprised at my surprise as I was at seeing them, for Robina had written and posted a letter on Monday, telling of their plan to come to spend the day. The letter hasn't come to hand yet.

I thought Robina looked plump and in good health but even as you, I, too, noticed that her hands tended to shake a bit. She says the doctor finds she is doing fine and has a good chance to live happily for years.

The Knipmeyers went on to dine and Magnolia and the ladies remained here, and it was all very pleasant. We did a little tour afterward (dinner), and then, as Robina had been commissioned to purchase a Hunter for some friend in Washi we skipped over to Clemence's house where a pretty canvass was readily located to everybody's satisfaction. Come to think of it, Clemence must be doing pretty well, what with her Old Age Pension check, her cotton and pecane picking and her pictures sliding along smoothly enough. I believe I. S. Willard purchased two or three, Ora a like number and Robina one, averaging a little better than one a day. I know not what money was involved in I suppose she may have rounded up somewhere between 25 and 35 dollars which is bound to make her happy about the whole situation. I think she is beginning to realize that being situated so close



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to Melrose has its advantages for I imagine a heap more people, having viewed her artistry in the African House and at Yucca where they probably appear to advantage, what with paintings by an African appearing in an African House, she probably gets more immediate patronage than when "taking care of Manuel's cousin" up Bermuda way.

There was a letter from, --of all people today, -- Madam Beaufort. I hope I can find it but I doubt if there is much chance, what with all the hurly-burly, but I'll run up on it one of these days and pass it along. It was merely a bread and butter thing but I didn't know she could write, - hence the amazement in receiving it.

Ora told me Beth is causing no end of trouble in the Williams family. It seems she visits her mother and browbeats her into giving her checks and her mother cannot resist her daughter's cajoling. Mrs. Williams's expenses cost the family six or seven hundred dollars a month and R. B. feels Beth has no right to be milking the estate for her own benefit, especially as Beth is married to a man of substance and as she spends money like a drunken sailor. Of course Beth is getting check out of her mother all the time. She pulled a new trick the other day in typical Beth style. Mrs. William has a Metoyer boy for yard man. Beth got her mother to make out a check for \$200.00 to the yard boy and then, taking it to him, told him to go and cash it and bring the money to her. Fortunately the boy went to R. B. instead of to the bank and so the cash wasn't forth coming. As the boy expected, Beth is now gunning for him and setting up her mother against him, all of which merely reveals what sort of disordered mind Madam Beaufort is possessed of. But I can think of nothing more Sister-like than rigging up things for her own benefit by making a sacrifice out of an innocent person of color. In short, Madam Beaufort is a bag. Fortunately she left for New Orleans today and goes from there to Washington and so will not be around to trouble people for at least a week.

I might go over to the big house to chat a while with Dr. Alben who is spending the night here, or perhaps I shall merely read a page from Chute's "Shakespeare's London and call it a day

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Walpole - Chossoul -  
Chatteloup

Friday, October 30th, 1953.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your pleasantly plump envelope in today's post. Along with several others from thither and you, it is resting safely in the armoire for another day's delight. Dr. Alben had all my secretaries picking pecaness from the trees on which he is experimenting and I suppose every mother's son and daughter may find themselves with a pocket full of money and the honkey-tonk a-deckoning. If I had picked pecaness from dawn to dusk, I suppose I could think of more entrancing things to do than bother with other people's mail and thus reason the secretaries, I suppose.

The weather continues all blue and gold but the thermometer didn't get above the 60's today. Last night we had our first frost of the season and while it did little or no damage to the greenery, it somehow fitted in nicely with the honking of the great flocks of geese passing over nightly and sometimes well into mid morning.

I am vastly impatient to read all of John Mason Brown's "As They Appear" which came to hand yesterday. It seems to be a compilation of essays or book reviews or both and so well turned out in the first one that I would gladly undertake exploring the whole 22 pages at a sitting. Your friend, A. Scourby, Esquire, sets the merchandise on to the counter and very pleasantly he arranges too.

I only dipped into the first article which has to do about the labors of somebody whose name sounds like Wilnot Lewis to the life of Horace Walpole. As I understand it, Mr. Lewis has presented a view of his position in relation to Walpoleana in a book by Knopf or Viking entitled "Collector's Progress", or some such, which he seems to have found time to write in spite of his pre-occupation with collection everything pertaining to Walpole and annotating Walpole papers for Yale University which has already brought forth 14 volumes of his papers, and plants 28 more volumes before finishing the job. The Lewis place is at Farmington, Conn., where all the Walpole things, - papers, letters, books, pictures, etc., have been assembled by Mr. Lewis on his own hook, and he plans to leave the whole business to Yale.



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This book of John Mason Brown in its first page reminds me a bit of that book I mentioned a while back having to do with the adventures of the Boswell papers, the Wise forgeries and so on. And as I read of Mr. Lewis and his interest in Walpole, I found myself hoping his Farmington collection may contain some or rather all the odds and ends of correspondence I once enjoyed so much that passed between Strawberry Hill, --the Walpole estate in England, and Chantlouppe, the property of the Duke de Choise and his sister, the Duchesse de Gramont. I never visited Strawberry Hill but I have pulled around over the ruins of Chatoupe down in the Loire neighborhood. Perhaps I have dwelt on this fabulous chateau in other memos. It was conceived and executed in almost royal fashion through funds supplied by the Princesse des Ursins during her domination of the court at Madrid and although she never occupied it, it was the home of her blind brother, the Duc de Noirmoutier. I never traced the abstract in all details from the 17 through the 18th century, but I was happy that the Choiseuls owned it in the 18th century and maintained the estate in handsome fashion. Perhaps the prize understatement about the place was made by Madame de Gramont when she invited Joseph 2nd to visit it when he was in France visiting his sister, Marie Antoinette. She mentioned the neighborhood to the Emperor, remarking that "nous avons une chaumiere la-ba". Now, Chantlouppe, if you don't mind, was certainly some chaumiere. Mr. Brown doesn't mention the names of any of Horace Walpole's correspondents but he does say Walpole was the epitome of 18th century England and perhaps as much might be said for the Choiseul-Gramont menage. I disposed of my Strawberry Hill - Chantlouppe letters years ago and it pleases me to think that at long last they may be resting safe in Mr. Lewis's colonial home in Farmington today.

I saw the ladies before they took off for the week end in Mansura. They were distressed they failed to see Robina and Nellie Ragan yesterday. Celeste remains quite high strung these days and somehow she jockeyed herself into almost feeling that it wasn't her fault that she had to be disappointed in being in the road yesterday and so missed the callers.. Poor thing, forever in hot pursuit of gaiety and usually coming abreast only with gloom. I have a couple of appointments for Saturday and Sunday, but I am hoping I may find a heap more time to myself and John Mason Brown this week end, and may some such pattern be that of little Miss Lee, too....

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P. s. The New York Times telegraphs it is impossible to run any pecane advertisements before Christmas, and so you need look for none. Odd, --at this late date, to have sent the message so late.

Sunday, November 1st, 1953.

Memorandum:

How nice to have your letters of Tuesday and Monday, -- and don't ask me why I placed them in that order, for actual I skimmed through them hurriedly in their right order.

The pecane-cotton combination has made the secretarial business so whimsical that I can but grab at bright eyes when they pass this way, what with regularity of schedule having been knocked into the middle of next week.

I chanced to have several pairs of good eyes over the week end at various times, but they were personal calls, and by white people, and of course I always save my confidential mail for the Ethiopian section. Accordingly I denied myself the pleasure of reading your letters until today when Saturday's frolic drains the pocketbook of the colored helpers and I am likely to get much offer of aid. Today was no exception but pilgrims kept interrupting, and so I shall get an equal amount of pleasure in reading your Monday and Tuesday letters on the morrow in more leisure, I hope.

But in advance of a more careful perusal I want to say how glad I am that comparative quiet has again settled over Manhattan and I am hoping this week end was comparatively uneventful.

And thanks for mentioning receipt of several communications from this area. I had begun to wonder if the memos made during the interim were making any headway toward their destination, since, actually, they should have been received at the same time a communication you mentioned as coming to hand in your letter of last week, was received. But just so long as they reached your true hand eventually, that is all that matters.

And isn't it nice that you had a little break at the office too. If only those silly conventions would last for weeks, it would be so nice.



1870

6375

Monday, November 2nd, 1953.

I'm glad you liked the ideas concerning the project or projects I have in mind to get started through the models that Mary Pringle will contrive so I may submit them to some manufacturer for quantity prices. My thought about the paper weight is to get a price quotation for quantity manufacture before presenting the idea to the Cotton Council, so that if they endorse the idea, the order can be placed by the Council, --in writing, -- and then the go ahead signal can be transmitted to the manufacturer. Perhaps nothing will come of it, but it will be fun trying. I might contact a wholesale gift house in New York regarding the African House, and I might not. Mary Ryan, Inc., of 226 Fifth Avenue used to handle stuff, but I don't know if she is in business yet. And besides there are lots of other channels through which the thing might be merchandised. Perhaps some arrangement may be made with Pringle so that she would be able to make a few to try out in gift shops in Louisiana at some fairly high price before giving any thought to quantity stuff. In the mean time, I may have sent you La Pringle's letter, indicating that her father has been returned to his home in Lecompte. Apparently the pneumonia was over come alright but now a kidney disturbs everyone in an uncertain frame of mind. Naturally La Pringle will not undertake paper weights and toy banks while such conditions obtain at home, although perhaps her father will improve shortly, I hope, or perhaps she will find that fiddling with such things as I have designed will take up a bit of the time that otherwise would be expended on worry. With her father at 87 it would seem such difficulties as he is having would be pretty telling, miracles keep right on happening and so perhaps he will come through nicely and with a suddenness of recuperation that will delight everyone.

I was pleased to dine alone today with J. H. while the ladies are in South Louisiana. He spoke of several things, including the fact that Pat's mother is becoming a problem that she has become an alcoholic and her husband will not let Eugenia's bother have her treated for that affliction. It seems Pat's brother is, or rather Eugenia's brother, --Pat's uncle, is quite rich and would be delighted to look after his sister if only the husband would permit.

This is a dull letter but I'll try to do better on the morrow when I hope there will have been fewer pilgrims.....

1870

6376

Monday, November 2nd, 1953.

Memorandum:

Another lovely day with All Saints and Halloween behind us having somehow scuttled by without having made much of an impression this year.

It was so kind of you to recall in your last letter the anniversary of the past week. I can recall the final evening in Manhattan with such clarity, the nip in the air, the pretty windows at Lord and Taylor's, the gray coat with the gray fur collar and.....au revoir. And the nicest thing about it all is the clarity with which it remains in my memory, and although there were gaps of silences in the days that followed before a satisfactory connection had been established, those seem to fade out of my memory as, with the passage of Time, the last evening in Manhattan burns ever brighter. May it forever be so.

My grapevine tells me that three mechanical cotton pickers are helping harvest the crop across the river today where a huge expanse of staple never seems to get picked before Christmas. According to report, it will be gathered before the end of the week at the present rate. This of course represents the beginning of a tide which will in all probability sweep away many a household by the time another year has come and gone. There's something a little sad about it, --the thought of these simple souls set adrift to find a mooring in some other locality which can never really represent home for them. But it is those of us who lift our eyes to the dawn of tomorrow who are sad and not those who will be most deeply effected. As a matter of fact, the rooting up of old ties will probably represent an adventure to be welcomed with glee because of its novelty for them and only with later times will come the nostalgic memory of life in the deep South. I suppose all innovations bring the same dolorous contemplations and all of us would do better to try formulating the betterments that may follow, perhaps not in one generation but in two or three.



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6377

I was at the store about 3 o'clock. The clerk told me the ladies had just returned from their week end in Mansura and that he was glad the workmen had just finished installing a new ice box across the fence before the travelers got back. New car, new ice box, new places to go.....and somehow it all reminds me of how the Madam used to say how envious she was of ladies who could get such unbridled joy out of buying a new hat.....if only pleasure could be assured by flouncing to town and acquiring a bit of new headgear.

I talked with Ora on the telephone today. She said their family had spent the week end at home instead of attending a football game some place or other. It seems the whole family came down with some intensinal complaint, not due to food poisoning and that half the town was suffering from the same malady, due, perhaps to a milk or a water infection. She said the lady doctor, busy as two bees in view of the wide demands occasioned by the difficulty, was distracted when she learned she had to absent herself from town for five hours attend to some business in Alexandria on Saturday afternoon. accordingly contacted another doctor, asking him to take over her patients to which he readily agreed. On reaching Alexandr she telephoned said doctor to give some forgotten recommendati for particular patients and to her amazement, was informed by his office girl that said physician had gone fishing. Imagine She thereupon telephoned the hospital and instructed various nurses to attend to the several duties during the interim of her absence. I had heard in recent Government reports that costs for medical attention had advanced recently but I don't remember anything having been said about the shortening of hours by the physicians in order that they might enjoy greater freedom for their practice of the piscatorial Arts.

From Sam Peace, I learned today that three different sets of pilgrims had tried to make the front gate last night after 5:30 but had been discouraged when he told them he didn't know where I was. I am glad he thought that one up. By 5:30 at this season of the year, night is beginning to cast a suffic shadow that would preclude all hopes of getting in a tour before utter darkness had set in. With no moon, what people expect to see at such an hour, I cannot imagine. I'm so glad Sam knows how to lie.....

6378

Tuesday, November 3rd, 1953.

Memorandum:

Cloudy and warm with a promise of rain for the morrow. Ringling Brothers, scheduled to present their circus in Alexandria on the morrow will not like that weather report so much. I had thought the Rands might make a round on Wednesday afternoon but the rain isn't promising and besides, the grandchildren will probably claim a go at the circus, thereby affording their elders and excellent excuse to head out for the big top.

I saw the ladies momentarily at the coffee hour and I was surprised to hear Celeste voice her happiness at being back home. She said she is getting too old to enjoy flying up and down the road all the time and, in the same breath, spoke of several jaunts she is planning as soon as she can catch her breath. --Miami and so on, which sounds like road running to me, and contemplated with enthusiasm.

I am not going to do much mail tonight for after reading a while, I want to keep awake long enough to see what the election returns may indicate. My guess is that the final tabulation may suggest that, as Mr. Lincoln expressed it, "you can't fool all the people all the time", but that is merely a guess.

I did a bit of r reading last night from Chute's Shakespeare's London. Perhaps it is the recording artist in part who succeeds in making the book remind me of the Britannica for bulk of information and absence of inspirational style. But the Britannica is a good place to get information and so is the Chute opus.

When I began reading the book, it suddenly dawned on me that actually I knew next to nothing about the subject. If I ever did know that the Bard of Avon had married a woman 8 years older than himself by whom he had a child six



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months after the nuptials had been celebrated and that there was a subsequent accouchement which brought forth twins. I don't ever recall having heard anyone mention the Shakespear twins, suggesting that I must have associated with people who knew or cared little about the details of the Shakespeare biography.

I don't know why I am forever being enormously impressed by the amount of traveling that was done in pre-steam days, I am. For instance, English players enjoyed a great vogue on the continent, and references are made to the popularity of the English actors when they performed at fairs held in German cities where the actors were wonderfully impressed by the sedateness of the German women. And there is reference to English actors welcomed at Elsinore by the court of Denmark, and how the King of Denmark provided two English actors with a carriage to convey them, following their Elsinore appearance, to the court of the King of Saxony. All this gadding about was in the 1570's or 1580's when France was being convulsed by the religious wars under the reign of the Valois kings who seem to have functioned mostly under the supervisions of the Queens.

Nobody in those days made more than the equivalent of three or four dollars on any plays they wrote. One wonders why they bothered writing them. Shakespeare's income came from his acting and apparently he was a very gifted actor on the boards. As for his plays, they were popular and because the public came to see them, each member of the company made money, but Shakespeare got no more than other members of the cast. The whole set up seems wonderful odd and unfair to the author but Shakespeare never seemed to do other than take such arrangements as matters of course.

Nearly all his associates in the theatrical group of which he was a member seem to have led sober, domestic lives and most of them owned houses in London and had children by the dozen. Shakespeare never set up an establishment of his own in London but did invest his earnings in Stratford real estate. I am looking forward to learning more about that aspect of his interest, what happened to his children and

Forgive this literary evening. I fear it makes mighty dull reading but I like talking over such things with you.....

1880

6380

Wednesday, November 4th, 1953.

Memorandum:

We have had a fine little old drizzle off and on all day, - not enough to create a puddle anywhere but just enough to soften up the ground a little. Tomorrow we are promised more and I hope my doubts about such good luck are without foundation, for an equal amount right now would just turn the trick for me when a heavy frost make it possible to start pushing things about at Arenbourg and Yucca.

Among the other blessings accruing from the drizzle was an endless parade of secretaries, giving me an opportunity to explore a stack of stuff hurriedly. I am hoping for a like phenomenon on the morrow when I shall go over things, out today, with more care, and after that, if any seem worth along, I shall do so.

As for yesterday's Democratic sweep I was of course delirious. I thought the most profound but most impolitic remark made concerning the matter was made by Chairman Hall of the Republican National Committee when he said that "our party is in trouble".

And while putting one's finger on the reasons for their trouble, I think one of them is caused by the mix-up in statements that have too often come from various members of the Administration. One good case in point was the remark by the Secretary for Air, --perhaps his name is Talbot, who said the Sp bases just acquired by the United States would be used to stock atom bombs while five minutes later the Secretaries of Defense announced both swore they wouldn't be, --and even if they were, they wouldn't admit it. Such contradictions by people who ought to know the answers must tend to create uncertainty and lack of confidence in the public mind.

In the matter of the Administration giving away to the big power combines the 14 billion dollar investment of the public's money is another case in point, but on a different front. The passing out of the graveyard such as the synthetic rubber works, the big dam sites, the talk about giving away TV, A and so on, and this tends to set me wondering why somebody doesn't coin a neat phrase about Christian doctrine urging gifts to the poor and the Republican doctoring of handing billions to the millions



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On thing I liked about the broadcasting of the election returns was the absence of the hysterical element and the seeming sense of balance that the net works I listened to gave in relation to other news items.

And speaking of the radio, I am reminded of a Chicago broadcast I heard last Saturday night. Colonel McCormick of the Chicago Tribune was spilling his weekly trivia in a senile fashion that made one feel shame-faced for him. The rounds of applause that follows each statement suggests an enormous clack must be forced into the theatre where these exhibitions are given. His program was devoted to pearls of wisdom he had selected from the great administrations, --and prominent among these were somewhat elaborate quotations from General Grant and General McKinley during the Presidency of each gentleman. Noth by way of a statesmanlike quotation had ben found covering the past 20 years, the colonel explained. Imagine, -- lots of wisdom in the Grant Administration, noting in that of F. D. R. I felt like taking pen in hand and writing W G N a letter, asking if not a single man could be found in Chicago who would have the courage to tell McCormick he no longer is qualified to clutter up the air ways with his senile tomfoolery.

I probably have mentioned before that Lyle used to talk about the paper attached to the bill board in the Times Picayune office.

"Those Who Ought To Be Dead", --

whereon this or that reporter or feature writer would jot down the name of this or that particularly offensive personality getting into the news. I should be delighted to append the name of Colonel McCormick on anybody's behalf, including my own.

I was glad to hear Raymond Swing on the E. Roscoe Morrow station tonight. I believe this is the first time I have heard Mr. Swing in 15 years and I like him. Don't ask me what E. Roscoe was doing 150 miles off the East Coast on an air craft carrier. Perhaps one thing that makes him a good reporter is his habit of turning up in such unexpected places. I think he would be doing almost as well if he would do less hopping about and devote a little less time to the reporter's role and a little more to that of the editor. And so, having complained about everything in and out of sight at this sitting, I guess I had better fold. ....

8880

Weeks Hall

6382

Thursday, November 5th, 1953.

Memorandum:

I am sorry to report that the promised rain did not materialize. But it was pleasant to see the sun again. It seems to me a new moon ought to be peeping over the bamboo hedge to the west, but perhaps it's a little early for it so far as November is concerned.

In the post with this letter, either enclosed or under separate cover, I am sending some mail, none of which is important but some of which you might find pleasure and difficulty in wading through. It is good to hear from Anne who is worthy of admiration for undertaking the job of correspondence which, as my secretary explains, leaves on a little uncertain in some places.

As for the letter from Weeks, I wish I might run through again but I think I am writing in understanding he has a reading machine and that he is currently engaged in running through Henry Adams' Chartres and Mont Saint Michael. --and I notice I spelled Michael in the English fashion which certainly sounds odd when I say to myself the first two in French and the third in English.

Be that as it may, so far as the oddity of sound is concerned I find it even more odd if these things have at long last been recorded. I perhaps mentioned years ago that I was in the habit of writing the Library of Congress on that score quite endlessly, --and then finally gave up after never hearing from them in regard to the items. It seems certain I should have noticed their listing, had they appeared in Talking Book Topics, recorded, --but of course I could have missed it. In view of all the racket I made over such a long period on this subject, it wouldn't have hurt the Library of Congress to advise me when they finally made up their minds. Perhaps we toil not in vain when we keep nagging them about the Saxon and the Proust "opi", although if they do record them but fail to list them, I'm not sure



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we shall get much pleasure out of them unless, through chance we eventually stumble over them unwittingly.

I am sorry that Rock Hall can't give me any suggestion on the milk glass thing. I suppose I shall have to begin the rounds again with Corning. As I recall, my first effort in that direction led to a "run around" wherein Corning recommended some manufacturer in Indiana and the Indiana manufacturer tossed me back at Corning. This time I shall start on a different tack.

I am so glad you mentioned the succeeding volume in the Churchill Memoires. It's going to be fun looking forward to reading them. I shall re-read the last volume again before long, trying to do so before the recording of the current one is released. It seemed to me in the first hurried reading of that one which I think he called the Grand Alliance, he somehow succeeded, either intentionally or unintentionally, of damning F. D. R. with "faint praise", especially as regarded the Italian campaign.

While at the Post Office this morning, I learned that although the better pecanecakes this year aren't too good, I asked that a sample, --regardless --be forward to 908 and was advised that your name was already on the list of out-going items. I reckon this must be Celeste's doings. I mention the matter in accordance with custom so that you may be advised in advance of the receipt.

Returning for a moment to the Churchill matter, I would remark, as I may have done in previous comment, that it seemed to me Mr. Churchill, surely inadvertently, put himself in an unfavorable light so far as his judgement was concerned when he complained bitterly that the Americans at time of the Italian landings, refused to give him some troops to capture of the Greek islands, and then, a little further along, remarked that the Italian effort taxed every sinew and every man and ton of material at hand was needed to make the attempt a success. Instinctively one cannot help asking what disaster might have befallen us if his request for the Greek enterprise had been granted.

And may I thank you again for the clipping about Diana Hopkins. Fate somehow gave her such tempestuous adventures in childhood, may the good Lord make her emergence into matrimony solid happiness all the way through.....

6384

Friday, November 6th, 1953.

Memorandum:

It's air - ish outside somewhere in the 50's, I suppose, but the air is bubbling over with ozone. I am just back from a trip over to the big house to raid the ice box and was impressed by the brilliance of the stars. Just as I returned to Yucca, Dr. Grady of the college in town called on some educational matter and asked how I was enjoying the down pour. It seems that 15 miles up the road, they are having a fine shower in contrast to the cloudless heavens obtaining here.

The sun was brilliant, --a hard brilliance as it always seems when the thermometer is low and the breeze brisk. I had to go to the store this afternoon and just as I stepped inside the front gate on my way back, a car came along and stopped. I turned back when some voice, -- a female one unfamiliar to me, inquired if a tour was possible. I stepped up to the car and did not recognize the speaker who turned out to be one of the two or three Mrs. Staffords of Alexandria, with Blythe seated beside her. The game lasted not more than two or three minutes which was two or three minutes too long.

Blythe wanted some palm leaves and groids. She said her brother, Horace, remains in the hospital, both eyes bandaged. One eye will not function, there is hope the other will. His misfortune was caused by diabetes which no one realized he had, least of all himself until he had gone to the hospital. She said she was having lots of fun with him, as, for instance, two or three days ago, she did his nails for him and when she had finished, told him the brilliant red liquid nail polish she had applied, looked wonderful. She said he really believed her and got terribly nervous as he concealed his hands, asking everyone who came to see him just how bad the crimson polish on his nails looked. It is impossible for me to conceive how a person like Blythe can be so lacking in imagination as to fail to comprehend her victim's situation and how such a thing can be funny.

I read a little more from the Shakespear and London book



1883

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last night which is more about the London theatre than Shakespeare, but learned several things of interest. There was mention of the death of Queen Elizabeth's death and the succession of Mary Stuart's son, James, as King. I didn't know before that James, although vigorous mentally, was unable to stand, although, and for that reason it is suggested, he liked to ride. I didn't know before that this King James in whose reign the King James version of the Bible was brought out, was himself an inveterate theatre goer and had the Shakespeare group present plays at the royal residences ever so much more frequently than Elizabeth had done. If King James didn't think much of the play, he was want to get up and leave in the middle of it, --or sleep through the whole performance. His taste in plays, however, may be judge perhaps, by the fact that he never marched out of or slept through any of Shakespeare's creations. Like Reubens, the painter so Shakespeare, the actor, was an astute business man, investing his earnings in real estate, mostly in Stratford-on-Avon, where all his transactions were carried on with wisdom and astuteness. He purchased the second finest house in Stratford, the grounds of the mansion embracing two barns, two orchards and a fine garden to which he retired on leaving the stage a few years before his death at the age of 52. I gather the property he had inherited from his father plus farm lands he had acquired as investments, all contributed to provide him with a very comfortable income. He was lucky having been born so that his maturity was lived during the reigns of Elizabeth and James, for already the Puritans were beating the drum that would eventually close all theatre and within within about 30 years would not only have eliminated the acting profession but the head of James' son, Charles to boot.

Well, so much for the literary aspect of things. On the home front everything seems rosey on the domestic side. His may be due in part to the fact that tomorrow is "Home Coming Day" at the college in which the lady across the fence always participates in the all day activities. There's some other frolic for the following week, and some pilgrimage business on the 29th, and not the least of all, the hubbub on December 6th for the turning on of the lights, with somewhere along the route the old turkey being tossed in for good measure.

At supper tonight, there was talk of scoundrel dealers in Cloutierville buying pecanes stolen by Melrose inhabitants, and that may or may not lead to some sort of a business, - I hope not. So things turn as the week end draws to a close. My it hold a heap of spare moments of relaxation for little Miss Lee.....

1883

6386

re: Mechanization

Sunday, November 8th, 1953.

Memorandum:

It was between 7 and 8 this morning. I was galloping a mile a minute on this machine, hoping to knock off a stack of letters before the wheels really got to turning when the telephone rang.

"Pilgrims", I muttered to myself and laying hold on the receiver, --instead of saying "Hello", I clipped out in an astonishing business like manner: "Chamber of Commerce".

A hoop went up from the other end of the wire. It was Ora who for a couple of minutes simply couldn't get hold of herself. She had seen some things on the TV last night she thought I would be interested in and wanted also to tell me about the storm you all were having yesterday.

It drizzled here all day yesterday and was chilly, but this morning, although the chill remained throughout the day, the sun shone with brittle brilliance, bringing plenty of pilgrims but, oddly enough, not a one who had gone to the trouble to make appointments earlier in the week. I suppose I had told everyone not to keep the appointments if it rained, and I suppose the Saturday drizzle canceled Sunday as well as Saturday.

After supper tonight, along about 7:30 or 8 J. H. started out of the house just as I was leaving his table and asked me if I would care to drive with him back in the Little River neighborhood to have a look at the pecane situation. He has a search light that plugs into the cigarette lighter on the dash board, and he drives through the orchards, sweeping the trees over vast territories. Why he does this, I wouldn't know, since anyone could see the search light coming for miles. And then, too, what with the new moon not yet above the Western horizon, I can't imagine how anyone would attempt picking up pecanes. But I was glad to make the little tour with him and to about aspects of agriculture generally. He feels mechanical cotton pickers are inevitable for all plantations within the immediate future and says both pickers and gins are sufficiently



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improved to raise the grade of the ginned cotton sufficiently to make this method profitable and that one year's harvest by a picker practically pays for the machine. He was at a party of the river gentry last night at the Guy Cloutiers, who were gathered such large planters as the Williamses, the Cloutie Henrys and so on. e said everyone agreed that cotton pickers were about to denude the South of tenants. He feels that plantations are on the point of getting bigger and bigger as the smaller farmers are squeezed out, unable as they will be to invest in the cotton pickers that cost about fifteen thousand dollars, and equally unable to secure sufficient manual labor to harvest the crops they may raise on limited acreage. He says he hasn't any idea what will eventually become of the tenant fam but supposes a few intelligent people of color, capable of opera machines, will be all that remains on the soil. He says F. D. R. tried to save or stave off the swallowing up of the small farms by the big plantations but, I gathered, the "change in Washington" will take care of all that.

Thus it appears one stands on the threshold of another era again, as so often during the past couple of thousand years, the big get bigger until the burst and a new arrangement replaces the old tendency or civilization of a particular brand simply goes to pot. Within my own time, I have seen mules give to tractors for cultivating purposes, with vast migrations of human beings northward. Now it appears the North has absorbed all it is likely to and now the mechanical picker will eliminate the field worker and as there isn't any point in migrating anywhere, the solution of that developing problem may have to be inaugurated right where it is being created. In many ways on a cotton plantation, the raising of the staple followed the same pattern as had obtain during the past 150 years. I am I had an opportunity to observe it and to recognize the advent of the transition. There will be heart ache ahead for many a soul but things have a way of righting themselves in the end and perhaps something quite to the good will come forth but not, I fear, before the present administration, has jockeyed things in such a way as to give the big shots an opportunity for at least one more big grab before re-distribution begins again.

Last night I thought of that old Bolshevik line about religion being the opium of the people. And what made me think was the fact that I began re-reading little Marcel's Swann's Way finding I like it just as much as 20 years ago and that while I should have been attending to correspondence, little Marcel's br was just the opiate for me to let the letters go so long as that inimitable combination of Proust interpreted by Scourby was available.....

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Monday, November 9th, 1953.

Memorandum:

The cloudless skies this morning found me holding the thought that the same could be said of those of Manhattan and that the major evidences of the week end storm had all been eliminated before travelers to midtown were astir.

At the moment we seem to be under a cold frontal attack, and tonight we are promised a low of 32 degrees, --a promise that seems most likely since the thermometer didn't creep above the lower 50's during the day.

I took precautions against Jack Frost by covering a few things, - camellias, butterfly lilies and such like, and if they come through the night intact, I shall enclose a butterfly in this letter. As in the case of grandiflora magnolias, so with butterfly lilies, it seems to me their perfume is altered slightly as the season progresses, although this may be pure imagination on my part. It strikes me that some of the July sweetness of the fragrance gives way to something more spicy in November. I wonder if you ever noticed any subtle variation in the faded flowers.

I was pleased with the Morrow report tonight on the present status in the case of Brownell-Eisenhower versus the late Harry Dexter White. Actually, I suppose, although Mr. Morrow didn't mention it, it is more a case of Eisenhower and Brownell and McCarthy against Mr. Truman and the Democratic Party. It would appear to me off hand that the Republicans must have felt they had just about touched the bottom of the barrel of public popularity if they can think up nothing better than to dig up a corpse, years in its grave, trotting it out as a horrible spectacle of something for which they apparently have no proof. It is astonishing Mr. Eisenhower let himself subscribe to all this business. I gather that the Republicans have no thought whatsoever as to what such business is having on the status of the American Government in the eyes of the world. Surely the Kremlin doesn't have to invent anti-Western propaganda these days since Messrs. Eisenhower, Brownell and McCarthy are supplying day-to-day material which



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requires no additions or alterations by the Soviet to make it present the United States Government appear to especial disadvantage.

Since it is said Mr. Eisenhower doesn't intend running for reelection, it seems to me if the Republicans can keep on crying "Big bad wolf" for the next two or three years, they can then nominate McCarthy for their candidate and Whitaker Chambers for Vice President and everything would be just dandy.

On the home front, the plantation functioned on a skeleton crew. Many of the children started in their winter term of school. Many of the gentlemen were not yet over their boisterous week end. Juanita had to remain at home with a cold and neuralgia. We dined across the fence, eliciting a mild nervousness on the part of the mistress. As for all elements in today's shambles, I care not, just so long as Juanita feels ever so much better on the morrow, thereby taking out all need for harping on the part of Harper's Bazaar.

I am thinking of doing something to get public attention slanted a little more in the direction of its colored population locally by doing a series of articles with Carmen Breaze under some such caption as "My Favorite Cane River Character". Carmen knows several town people of color who shouldn't have to wait for their obituaries to appear before having something nice said about them. For my part in the series, I might do a few sketches of people around here. Naturally I would start off with Clemence, asking the article carry with it a picture of her at her easel. Thanks to the lady doctor, Ora and others, the Clemence paintings are beginning to enjoy a certain vogue among the discontented social butterflies of Hatchitoches who will leap at a fad and perhaps invest in paintings if they get the impression they are becoming fashionable. My primary purpose in proposing this series of articles is to give Clemence a boost, but I shall find space to put in the wood carver and others whom the public of newspaper readers should know something. The pressure on everyone between now and Christmas is probably too great to accomplish much before the New Year, but I shall start my articles immediately, holding them until Carmen can knock them off on her own hook.

I plan to do little correspondence tonight. In fact, I'm going to play it's Saturday night and have a round or two with little Marcel.....

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P. S. thanks so much for the Mary Ryan address and also for telling me of the Denhome exchange.

6390

Tuesday, November 10th, 1953.

Memorandum:

Thirty million sunbeams sparkled on the crystal frost this morning as I returned from the Post Office.

It turned out to be everybody's birthday, - Arenbourg's, Iestan's and all, and naturally the soles of my shoes scarcely brushed the glistening powder of the frost.

And when next you see little Miss Lee, will you be so kind as to try to give her some notion of all the happiness she so open heartedly dispensed. And would you also tell her never to worry about the exchange of letters, for just so long as the channel is kept open, whether it is used as much as she would like to cuts no ice at this end of the course. - For the understanding is quite clear as to all the demands on her time and energy and happiness at this end is the greater when, assured that everything is alright, one recognizes that an over-loaded schedule necessitates at the moment the exchange of thoughts and sentiments by telepathy.

And may I tell you that the photographs of the Joyous Coast came through in perfect condition. I think you will agree with me that they recorded on film with marvelous clarity. Surely they will make perfect material for re-publication in print form whenever the appropriate moment arrives. I am so happy to have them and I thank you again and again for having achieved such a splendid piece of business.

This morning the thermometer stood at 32. This, of course, means lots of things, but since it turns out to be Arenbourg's birthday, the advent of the frost all all will mean that plans will go ahead for additional decorative schemes in that direction. As the sap in the plants naturally seeks a recess within the structure housing its vitality, so plans for this new undertaking unfold concurrently, and it is always so pleasant to contemplate such new departures in long range gardening in joint association with the only one in the world who has a perfect understanding of the hopes that



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go into such matters. Is it any wonder the sky seemed unusually radiant this morning and that my impatience for the morrow bubble

I covered some of the more delicate plants again tonight, finishing by the light of the thin moon, low over the Montrose hills. The frost will not be so pronounced tonight, but I like to give a hand to the more delicate things to keep them green and flowering a while longer. The banana plants were too vast for me to undertake coverage in that quarter but the transition from green to gold this Saturday when 50 members of the faculty at the local college pass this way, will be pretty.

And speaking of the changing season, it would appear that seasons are more given to such things than human beings. From a source of unquestioned authority, I learned today that the member of the family living in town who, on doctor's recommendation, mounted the water wagon a couple of weeks back, fell off with a terrific bang over the week end and that things were still going strong last night. The most deplorable part of the business was his contact with people, --barging in on them, when in no condition to be presentable to the casual pedestrian. What a pity, heir to so much, incredible joviality when high, vicious when low. Mental instability, like his sister, is bad enough but when coupled with artificial stimulant, how dreadful.

Some nice people, a Mr. and Mrs. Plumber or some such name, passed this way from Omaha this morning. This was their initial visit to Louisiana and they were perfectly enchanted with all they had to see. Something tells me we shall be hearing from Nebraska about the time they are back again in Omaha.

From the chamber of commerce I learned today that the festival program will be available late this week or early next week. I shall send you two or three copies as soon as they appear. Some of the material is new, --such as the account of Oakland, but the Melrose material is merely a cut rendition of the Times special issue. If you find this offers too much duplication, feel quite free to throw the program aside after you have glanced through one of them. But I notice I have already come to the end of the page and so shall stop tapping but shall continue to operate the telepathy dynamo. It has been such a happy day thanks to just one.....

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Wednesday, November 11th, 1953.

Memorandum:

Another heavy frost last night and still another promised for tonight. The old adage, "three frosts and a rain" will perhaps bring moisture on Saturday, I hope, for that would knock out the college faculty members, perhaps half a hundred, who are scheduled for a tour. Next year I am going to have them come in October because the group is made up of "new comers" on the faculty and often these people from all around the country consist of people who have never seen a Louisiana plantation before. And I am all in favor of people in that category seeing a plantation when the lushness of vegetation is still lush and not had a Jack Frost crimp put in it.

I am frequently asked when the maximum floral effect is to be encountered in this section and I usually say I think about the 1st of May produces the most colorful effect, for then the cannas have attained a height of 7 or 8 feet, lots of flowering shrubs are in blossom and the grandifloras are approaching full tide in the glory lamp department.

February, of course, sees the Chinese magnolias and the oceans of bulb flowers to advantage, but the absence of new greenery leaves a little void in coloring which somehow fails to fill out the vegetation completeness, --a void of which I am always conscious. As I like all seasons of the year, it would be difficult for me to say which particular month suits me best, but I'm inclined to think the middle of September comes pretty close to being my pet page on the calendar. Perhaps this preference seems in part from the fact that cotton is then rolling toward the gin, --a feature having nothing to do with the gardens, of course, but somehow infusing a climate to the setting which although not seen, is somehow felt and voices of the pickers heard on the inside of the bamboo hedges separating the commercial side of the plantation from the horticultural side. September means the bananas in bloom and the butterfly lilies in flower and the Guernsey lilies in September trace their flaming swirls around the African House and gourds, half hidden in the bushes where their fruit is semi-concealed, all somehow combine to



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produce an impression of perfume, color and opulence which is scarcely approached by any other month of the year.

The funeral of Hermon Taylor of Natchitoches, drowned a couple of days back, will be held tomorrow. Although his wife is generally understood to have money, as part of an estate, I had no idea their bank balance was of a nature that her brother, living in Texas, would find it convenient to send his private plane, --he maintains a pilot all year round, -- send his private plane thither and you to provide transportation to countless friends throughout Texas, Oklahoma and so on, so that they might attend the funeral in Natchitoches. The plantations get bigger and bigger and the little fellows view the contraction of their own holdings from year to year as bigger and better air planes, hilly billy owned plough the skyways to deliver funeral guests to services for a man who with all the monetary attributes for culture, manifested little or nothing by way of civilized influences. Somehow it all seems so cock-eyed and so, shall I say, so Brownell.

On the confidential side, Celeste told me yesterday that a couple of days ago one of her best friends had seen Mrs. Stephen G. Henry getting into a car near the hotel in Natchitoches. It seems a little odd that she should be in Natchitoches and not bother to stop off here or at least to telephone to say Howdy. What with her sister up Shreveport way being subject to occasional fits of insanity, it was natural to assume that perhaps Madam General was going up that way to see her or was returning to Baton Rouge from such a trip. I suppose she was in a hurry and so didn't bother to call Celeste for whom she passes for having much affection. The fact that she would be passing Montrose, as she must, to get to Natchitoches, does indicate, however, that she exist without stopping or contacting Melrose, even when so close by.

The weather was so fine today I felt full of vim and vigor and don't seem so very tired at the end of a busy day of gardening. I attribute much of this feeling of zest to all the nice things stemming from little Miss Lee in yesterday's post. And tomorrow, what with the promise of fine weather, will be another transcript of yesterday, and I find myself bubbling over with delight as I dig and deliver, forever feeling that I don't do so alone but always in company with a silent partner....

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Thursday, November 12th, 1953.

Memorandum:

Starting off any letter with an apology dooms whatever follows, and I so doom this memo by explaining that if the typing is unusually bad, I am sorry.

The fact is that I snipped the end of the index finger on my right hand and while the cut was nothing, it chanced to be at some magical spot that required the end of the finger to be bandaged and you know how clumsy I can be when free from such an impediment and by the curious typing of this memo you will have an opportunity to observe how doubly so I can be in such swaddling clothes.

From the enclosure, you will note Bob Segelou is having some like trouble but as my secretary had no difficulty reading his letter, I assume his typing is better than mine. Of course one instinctively asks why the wife doesn't serve as his assistant in this instance but perhaps she has broken her arm or some such, which would, indeed, make going even more difficult.

J. H. and I had part of our supper alone tonight which gave us an opportunity to cover everything from Ezra Taft Benson to television. Referring to the latter (latter), he said it occurred to him that Madam Regard might enjoy TV a lot and so he had ordered one set up in the house for her early next week. The omission of the associate of Madam Regard implied, I assumed, that in his opinion, nothing in the world would persuade the lady to "stay put". One thing is certain, he, himself, will never spend any time being entertained by the thing. Popular sets around here seem to be priced around \$500.00, although I don't know if that is the wholesale or retail price. Frank Edwards said last night that prices on TV sets are on the verge of tumbling from 28 to 40 per cent and the fact that color TV is beginning to put in an appearance the black and white sets will probably tend to be offered at lower prices shortly.

I had an opportunity to run through several things I



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wanted to re-read today, and I want to thank you again for the clipping you sent concerning Arny Carman. I shall return it in this letter, thinking you might want it for your scrapbook. I notice it mentions his birth place as Greenfield, New York. I never heard of the place but I'm curious to know where it is. If you have to know anyone versed in New York State geography, perhaps they might tell you, but I pray you to go to no trouble about the point as it is sheer curiosity on my part and is in no way vital to my happiness of mind.

As J. H. is a staunch Republican, his remarks on the Brownell business interested me much. He said surely nobody could believe that Mr. Truman would appoint a Russian ~~spu~~ to any office and that he felt Brownell had been way off when the best he could do was to dig up somebody who had been dead and buried for years.

I thought E. Roscoe Morrow's mention of the British carton at the end of his program tonight was pretty good. Foreseeing that you might have missed his broadcast, I pass it along, as I recall it:

In one of the conservative British papers, perhaps the Times, today, appeared a cartoonish sketch of two American Senators standing below a bust of George Washington, and one of them is saying to the other:

"Personnally, I am in favor of re-opening the matter of the cherry tree, as he might have been trying to shield somebody."

We are going to need a lot of such cartoons before we get through with all this tomfoolery. Unfortunately nothing can be done to repair the damage to American prestige abroad caused by this tremendous Brownell blunder.

Celeste tells me that Paynie's widow who is going to coll in town, plans to take herself to a Catholic retreat on December 21st, to remain a week or ten days. She is a Baptist but, I am glad to say, the Catholic Church in this area of the country, provides places where people of any demonimation may withdrawn for a while, --a opportunity which I wish more people would make the most of. I think Frances is pretty smart selecting the holiday season for her withdrawal from society. If only her sister in law in Shreveport would go in for it, to

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Friday, November 13th, 1953.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Monday and Tuesday letters in today's post.

J. H. was busy as a hen a-settin', and I am accordingly holding the envelope containing the clippings you so kindly sent along for his delectation when, on the morrow, he will have moments of relaxation and I know he will be genuinely appreciative of your thoughtfulness.

And may I thank you for giving me some notion as to how the storm last riday came, --and went. Naturally I could well imagine that atmospheric conditions altered many a week end plan. But thank heaven for the rain that followed the snow, for this week end, perhaps the snow has gone and if so, everyone will be doubly determined to make up for a lost week end by trying to work two into one, beginning along about tonight, I hope.

It was so kind of you to figure out the line Anne had written when off the track of her keyboard. I haven't written her yet, but shall do so this week end. Because of my own splintered secretaria routine, I hesitated about writing her immediately, but I reckon all Georgetown crops of cotton and pecanes have long since been garnered and I have no doubt her own secretariat is bound to be more dependable than mine. Surely it couldn't be much less, --and I seem to make out alright.

I hope you got a chance to hear E. Roscoe Morrow tonight, for you did, I think you may have enjoyed his about of Robin Hood and his obvious razz of the whole rank and file of McCarthy-ites that or who have figured so prominently in this week's news. I thought his quotation from Wilde so apt, and oddly enough, he took the words right out of my mouth, for the same line he quoted had been turning over in my mind all day.

At coffee this morning, I recalled the hope expressed last night that Madam Regard might enjoy the new T V set. For it was



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evident when Celeste mentioned the impending gift that she was anything but enchanted at the prospect. Later in the day, the clerk told me that when the men came to rig up the aerial and were talking with the master, the wife stepped into the store and announced before the men and everyone else that as a matter of fact she had no place for a T set in her house and that they could be mighty sure that the cabinet was maho gny or she wouldn't have the thing under her roof.

It was at that point that the Wilde quotation came to mind:

"I can believe anything, --just so long as it is incredible. Letter and the enclosures speak for themselves. J. H. spoke of the article in Esquire some time back which caused such a furor in Texas. From the phraseology in the printed article which Dora sent, I am not surprised that the Esquire article may have well caused ripples across the vast expanse known as the Lone Star State.

In view of Arenbourg's recent birthday and all, I wanted to ask you to do me a favor whenever you chance to see little Miss Lee alone. At such a time, would you be so kind as to remark to her in passing that, --and surely she must already know this, --if ever it seems convenient to her to fill out the check up to a couple of hundred items against the account in the bank of which she holds the blank check, I hope with all my heart she will do so without ever thinking of mentioning it in advance and without any thought that it is anybody's but hers to draw on, should circumstances make said drawing seem convenient and without ever any thought of replacing same. We both understand her so well that you will agree with me, I feel sure, that she will not scoff at such a modest thing. I can't think why I haven't appealed to you in this matter before and it was that the amount itself seems so insignificant that mentioning it seems so trivial. I feel certain, too, that, as suggested above, there was no need to mention it since the holder of the check would always know it is as much hers as anybody's and it's always to be considered something that might readily be employed whenever desired without mention of it to anyone. I hope she will forgive me for not having mentioned it before, and at the same time, I blush in mentioning at all, it is so insignificant, and yet mention it I must and if you will pass along the word on my behalf, I shall be so grateful.

And now I must break off and do some mail and thence to Marcel for a round and then to bed, for the morrow will be busy....

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Sunday, November 15th, 1953.

Memorandum:

It was such a busy week end all around, of a squirrel in the cage variety.

Late Friday I learned there were to be two parties on Saturday morning and one in the afternoon, --some kind of a coffee at Beaufort, something else in town, and then in town again in the afternoon. Naturally nobody and nobody's servants could do anything for the big house by way of freshening things up, following all the dust of late, although everyone knew the college faculty would be coming Saturday afternoon.

And so I figured I would have a go at things early Saturday morning, but I failed to take Shreveport into my calculations and you may well imagine my surprise and disappointment when the whole posse of Wenks blew in at breakfast time on Saturday morning to spend the day.

Frankly the day was long, --awfully long. I had la bag on my hands until dinner time in a solid sitting, with offspring prancing about all over the place and firing their automatic rifles at a great rate. They don't think much of such fire arms any more, having decided they want shot guns. That's wonderful, too.

By the grace of God, Sister had to slide down to Cloutierville for a little while just after dinner. I made the most of her absence and smoothed out a few things before the faculty members arrived. She had returned before the tour was well under way, but I got through it alright, and spent the balance of the afternoon hearing more wild tales about everything under the sun, not half of which, I reckon, were true.

Fortunately she wasn't drinking and therefore not quite so difficult to handle, but the things she recited certainly indicated a lack of wisdom if what she told about herself had any foundation of truth at all. A case in point is a line like this:



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"I went to the opera the other night. I can't stand opera. Everybody in the place was looking at me, thinking I was drunk because I fell flat on my face but I certainly wasn't."

I shudder at the thought of the old people in her nursing home. The institution embrace five separate buildings, she says. The trouble is we are prevented by law from locking them in, she explains, "and you know people in such places are always trying to run away as soon as your back is turned."

I don't know about that but I would be trying to commit suicide if I were one of those oldsters caught in her clutch.

At 4:30 she asked Juanita to feed one of the boys. At 5:00 she ate by herself, then sent one of the children to the store to get J. H. and the rest for supper at which the balance of her offspring ate. By 5:30 they had all started in the direction of their car and home. All in all, it was a day.

The weather continues chill at night but cloudless and pleasantly warm in the day. I had a few nice pilgrims today and between times, I relished the quiet.

I have been having a little difficulty with this worn out ribbon but the new one sitting here beside the machine is going to be put on tomorrow, I hope. It's odd how many people pass this way and how few of them, --how none of them, seem able to "lace" up the machine. But an expert in such matters is just around the corner, seeming to promise a substitution of substance for shadow within another day or so.

J. H. has such a cold one can scarcely hear his voice. On returning from the club tonight around 8, he asked me to tell you how much he appreciated the clippings which I do herewith. He also said that several merchants in town whom he had seen at the club and voiced the thought that Melrose got the big slab of publicity in the current program of holiday festivities. There has always been opposition on the part of the merchants who pay for the advertising in the program to any reference to Natchitoches Parish outside the Natchitoches city limits. They fail to grasp the fact that many potential customers find themselves in the town simply because they have been "lured" into the region by the unique appeal of the Cane River country. Besides, it must be admitted that while Melrose got the lion's share, I contributed the pictures and article, representing as much labor as any of the paid advertising, if measured in physical and mental outlay.....

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re: Dr. Butler

Monday, November 16th, 1953.

Memorandum:

If this note suddenly plays out, don't be alarmed, it will merely mean an attempt at changing the ribbon finally got under way, --and was not a success.

The big news of the day was the unexpected letter from Roan. Off hand, her inquiry regarding thanksgiving seemed like quite a large order.

I shall write a negative response immediately, of course. I should very much like to see her and Alice but the holiday season is certainly not the time.

I am vastly indebted to her for passing along the news concerning Dr. Butler. It will be so helpful when I drop him a line from time to time. His eventual departure will mean the turning off of one of the brightest intellectual beacons that bridged the gap between ante bellum times and today. He it remarkable he should have been possessed of so much, a distinguished lineage, perhaps the greatest aristocrat of the Adams County nobles a splendid mind, a wonderful teacher, the kindest host, the most sincere friend, cultivating thousands of rich acres and very few close associates and dwelling in the most historic mansion in the Natchez country to which he admitted few but shared as by common ownership with those he took to his heart.

Once in a life time, --sometimes twice, you may find some body who obviously understands what you are talking about. I have been exceedingly rich, for two such persons I have known, --Dr. Butler and little Miss Lee. It is as beyond understanding as the laws of the universe. Like them, it is one of those things that is. It can never be explained to those who fail to experience it, and for those who experience or sense it and those laws, no explanation is required. And having said precisely that, surely I need say no more on that score to little Miss Lee.



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A couple of letters from Dora leave me as much in the dark as the blackness of the stationary on which they are written. He may be fiddling around with a wonderful product, but, so far as I can see, he has not succeeded in acquainting me with the whys and the wherefores of its excellence. Admiring him as I do, I take his word for it that it is wonderful stuff and undoubtedly better than any other oil on the market, but it seems to me he has not sufficiently set forth its merits to such a point as to make people suddenly drop everything and rush out to invest in the stuff.

I shall write him to night, making a few suggestions which I haven't had time to formulate in my mind as yet, what with half a dozen things cooking immediately following the reading of his letter. Perhaps I shall recommend that he consider the efforts currently being made by the producers of butter and their efforts to sell the public on the idea that in spite of Blue Bonnet virtues, there's nothing like real butter, --and I haven't been sold on that idea yet by the butter makers, for much educational work is required, since I am an amateur in such matters and accordingly have no notion as to the merits of either product.

Perhaps he should get some big concern such as one you might be acquainted with to market the product. Perhaps he should get some restaurateurs of excellence, such as Schraft's, to endorse the thing. Perhaps Charles of New York and its counter-part in New Orleans, --the name eludes me momentarily, to market the stuff as being the last word as an aid in the culinary Art.

I, for one, would be perfectly willing to accept Dora's word for it that the stuff is the best thing on earth. But the company wouldn't get rich if it depended on my purchases. And so I conclude that some organization with endless advertising resources, will have to get behind the thing, and that will probably mean much less profit for the producers, and there will be the question: -- whether to be content with a long, educational endeavor with the prospect of small profit, -- or letting the whole thing go. Poor Dora, -- there are so many long miles ahead, I fear. If ever there were a soul who deserved a million it is good old Dora, but million dollars have a way of cropping up so often in places where the finder seems so scantily deserving.

And so I fold up my beard for this sitting. At supper J. H. said Pat telephoned from New York today. I suppose I might use that information when saying no to Roan.....

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Tuesday, November 17th, 1953.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Wednesday letter in today's post.

And may I thank you for ev rything, including the transcript of the letter from Weeks which definitely settles the fact that he has the Adams' Chartres recording. I shall inquire from the American Foundation when this was recorded, since the Library of Congress never gets around to answer letters.

I wish I knew somebody in the Congressional Library who could tell me how book selections are really made. As you know, I have long suspected that the forms they send out are pretty much shams and that somebody or other in the organization selects the books and the voices of the Board are ignored for the most part. Something like Invitation to Learning may get action because of the direct letter, and since it was years ago I requested the Adams thing, perhaps that request by letter was also acted upon. Still, not since the recorded Talking Books Topics have been issued have I heard of the Adams book being put off disks, leading me to assume it may have been listed prior to the disk reviews. Still it does seem it wouldn't have hurt the Library of Congress to acknowledge my request or at least advise me that it had been acted on favorably. I know some politicians in Washington who would leap at the opportunity to make a bit of inquiry regarding the operations of the Blind Section of the Library but naturally I don't want to start anything like that which might lead to endless inconvenience on the part of the members of the organization, but, nevertheless, I do wish they would at least acknowledge their mail.

I'm so glad you ran across the Zweig book and are liking it. And how nice that you could readily turn to the works of some of the people he mentioned, -- von Hofmanstahl and so on. You mention the Erasmus biography. Perhaps you have reached the point where Zweig remarks that it is in the nature of a self portrait. I should like to read that one especially, and I would enjoy having a go at Mary Stuart, too.



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It was kind of you to speak of Robina's letter to you. I had a letter from her today but did not finish reading it, for it is in long hand and the supper bell got to dinging before we had concluded. It's such a pity she didn't keep one of her type-writers when she disposed of her business. I nearly wrote recommending that she give it thought, even though I didn't know about the sale of her business until after it was accomplished, although the letter came before she had turned it over to the purchasers, but somehow I took it as a matter of course that she had one at home or would see to it that she took one there. She reported just returning from Monroe where last Wednesday her brother-in-law dropped dead. Odd, isn't it, how she and her sister should have both been in the hospital for heart matters and the brother-in-law should have fallen out.

Today's weather forecast was for fair and warm. The warm part was correct and tonight it continues so much so that I have all doors and windows open. But from the Gulf a gentle rain blew in along about 3 o'clock and it has been drizzling ever since, --it now being 9:30. All our "children" can take all the water the skies care to give and I hope there will Wedgits got my first look at a TV cabinet, --merely the cabinet with its 21 inch screen, and in mahogany for wood work, I might add. So far as I could make out, there should be doors of some kind to cover the screen when the thing isn't functioning, but that detail is unimportant. Tonight being Alexandria night, the Reverend Fathers will undoubtedly be among those present for a go at the programs. An invitation was issued to me but naturally I declined. To quote an old plantation mistress, --today was an anniversary, come to think of it, --and I usually try to avoid retaining such dates, --to quote an old plantation mistress, --"We ain't got to catch no train", and since I have been quite ignorant of how a TV looks in operation all these years, I can wait a while longer before having a look at the thing some afternoon.

Besides, and quite apart from keeping my nights inviolate, I want to, --and I don't want to, finish Du Cote De Chez Swann, and the "don't" part is due to the fact that the succeeding volume isn't available for me to go on with. Each time I re-read Proust, I tell myself what, say, the Parthenon was to ancient Greece, so is A La Recherche to contemporary European civilization, -- one of the unique monuments of our times.

Lord, Lord.....I've been so wordy I have already reached the end of the page before saying anything. But I am happy for this little exchange of thoughts and especially for your grand letter with its enclosure.....

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Wednesday, November 18th, 1953.

Memorandum:

How nice to find the long hand letter from little Miss Lee in today's post, along with a surprise package for which I am altogether delighted.

As ybough you had been reading the stars, you provided a Royal ribbon at just the time I needed one most. The attempt to get this machine "blaced up" came to naught when it was discovered that some imperfection in the ribbon I had to hand made it impossible to get it into the machine. Tonight or tomorrow night I am hoping to try out today's gift, for I have a feeling the present ribbon is growing mighty ethereal.

And may I tell you how delighted I am with the bulbs. I have an idea I may have some success with them this year, although much will depend on several circumstances, including the presence or absence of a green thumb on my part.

Last night's drizzle gave way to clear skies this morning and what with the thermometer at 80 today, it seemed like an excellent moment to plant the bulbs. I have placed them in big pots along the front gallery where they will get a maximum amount of sun when the weather is as it has been today. Being close to my boudoir, I can easily set them inside the house should J. Frost, Esquire, suddenly decide to make an unwelcomed visit. Thus, from such an advantageous position, I firmly believe I shall be able to persuade them to make as good a go of it as though they were kept inside all during their growing period. I can't expect the thermometer to remain in the 80's all Winter, but if the season is as mild this year as last, they will certainly be able to spend most of their time out of doors. If one doesn't have to consider cold spells, it seems to me almost any plant is likely to thrive a little better out of doors than inside, and we shall see what we shall see as the season advances. Last summer's drought slowed up the narcissus bulbs but now they are beginning to put up bravely enough and I'm hoping the freesias will out-distance them before so very long. I shall report on same at odd times.



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You will enjoy the enclosure from la Storm, for she really writes a good letter. It came at a time when I had just finished a section of little Marcel wherein he was rattling off the names of a flock of places, - Balbec, Lamballe, Bayeux and so on, obviously for the sheer pleasure of seeing the visions that the recitation of each of these name evoked, and here comes something of the sort from the West Coast, putting me in mind of Proust.

I'm sure you will get as big a kick out of the reference to politics as did I. One may assume, I suppose, that la Storm and la Denholme are pretty much in the same boat on that subject. I thought the reference to the election in Reno particularly hilarious, coming as it did at just the time Kay's mother could dish out her enthusiasms.

You mentioned the annivers ry date through which we are passing, as of yesterday and today. I recall so vividly the cloudbursts and storm of five years back and the contrast with tonight's velvety air and huge full moon seem to make the time span eons apart. In a note to Lillian Trichell today I remembered upon the calendar date and said quite frankly that I found I was not sad in contemplating the scene as of then and now, what with the lady having so often during the last months saying how ready she was to go and, in view of many family things that have transpired since, being glad that all those unpleasant episodes arrived only after her departure to a land where such things could never reach her. Any way it's sliced, Tragedy is Tragedy but sometimes the disguise, like that of Good Fortune, is so perfect that only "larger other eyes" can properly evaluate the depths of both and distinguish the one from the other.

I learned from Madam Regard that last night's TV party consisted mostly of the Reverend Fathers, and that Father Calahan, an ardent admirer of Senator McCarthy, reached over and cut the radio when a re-broadcast of the Truman state came on the air, since the Reverend Father wouldn't listen to anything "that man" would have to say. Messrs Calahan and McCarthy seem to have much in common and I never touch on politics when with that group of the clergy.

But the Reverend Father may keep his politics as he pleases I shall stick to the embryo freesias, don't you think so....

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Thursday, November 19th, 1953.

Memorandum:

And so, as you will have long since noticed, a new ribbon is to hand. But I must confess it was accomplished by the hardest. My expert labored mightily at the "lacing" or "threading" or whatever they call it, but eventually I had to treat the machine to the store where even the experts couldn't get to first base with it, --the spools refusing to turn. But eventually it got around somehow, and naturally I am as happy as a clam to be in touch with the outside world again.

Surely the newly planted freesia bulbs must be making up their minds already, for the weather continues humid and warm. Tomorrow we are promised something below today's 80's, whereupon the freesia will step inside for a spell. And then, out they will go again when warm days return.

The leaves have all fallen from the disiduous trees and bushes and the ground is a lovely carpet of varying shades of brown, yellow and gold. Only the sweet olives and the lantana are in bloom, and in both cases, it is the perfume of these and not their floral trappings that makes them impressive.

Still, the freshness of the newly fallen leaves, still retaining their individual shapes and colors, makes a pretty November picture and many of the half hundred representatives of State Welfare organizations passing this way today found an element of attractiveness in this study of green and brown now dominating the gardens.

A note from Mary Pringle this morning announced the death of her father who was to be buried this afternoon. I shall drop her a note before folding up tonight, and a note of condolence is easy, for her father had been vigor



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all his 87 years, and to have had his several daughters with him during his first and last illness is bound to provide solice for his children.

Under separate cover I am posting the current issue of the Louisiana Conservation leaflet. I doubt if the articles in it are any good but I notice it mentions Black Lake and I imagine the map may be devoted to that region, too. You may recall that in going to Briarwood from here, one crosses a segment of Black Lake which is situated about half way between Hatchitoches and Saline where Caroline gets her mail. Saline, if it is on this map, would be at the top, and Briarwood is about one South of Saline on the road from Chesnut to Saline. I don't suppose this map at the bottom comes down as far as Hatchitoches, but I suppose Kampti map-appear down at the bottom, and perhaps Clarence are about 7 miles above Hatchitoches. You may know this region from other maps, but as it covers that section which Dr. enjamin Chase co The Wilderness in his Journal, and as sections of it were long inundated by the reat Raft of Red River, I thought you might like to glance at it. Don't bother to save the thing, however, as I have no use for it.

A Dr. Jones of Hatchitoches whom I don't seem to know, began acting a bit odd recently, one manifestation that he was coo-ooo being that when turning in at night, he would take his revolver to bed with him and shoot out the electric blulb instead of turning off the switch. Yesterday he chased all his patients out of his waiting room and got in his car immediately afterward, heading up toward Grand Ece On the way, he ran into a horse and rider on the highway, it killing the horse and breaking the ribs of the negro rider. Dr. Jones hasn't been seen since. I take it his days of practicing medecine in Hatchitoches, at least, are about over. ut don't you like the some what novel way he had of inducing darkness on retiring at night.

I didn't see the ladies across the fence today. It seems they headed out for Alexandria early this morning I suppose they were using Christmas shopping as an excuse and making the most of whatever frolic might be contrived. I am still thinking about the louliest package of their last year's concocting, --redolent with sweet wrapping paper and ribbons, all so neatly and tastefully put together to cover one pack of Camels for Andy I honestly think I am not over stating the case when I opine that the merchandise costing 25 or 30 cents was rigged up in 50 or 60 cents worth of doings. It was all so wonderful and squirrel in a cage.

Tonight I am not going to read because I haven't anything to read which seems simple enough. It would be so nice doing a chapter jointly with little Miss Lee from the Zweig opus.....

3013

6408

Friday, November 20th, 1953.

Memorandum: here's a lovely moon tonight. It must be just a bout full.

The banana colonnade in front of Yucca is so pretty in the yellow light, for after Jack Frost converted the verdure into chrome, the application of the liquid light of the moon on the arid chrome of the withered leaves produces an effect that makes Marie Therese's architectu look like something out of Beardsley illustration for a mystery tale of Poe.

Grandpa and Outer Mongolia found the hour good for a frolic around the rim of the big pot, one chasing the other around and around this three inch platform between space on the outside and water on the inside, with neither one, I think, knowing which was chasing and which being chased. But this feline rotation around the edge of the great cauldron introduced just the right color and motion against the motionless background of sagging banana foliage to create a mood in which anything unearthly might be expected to issue and more than probably, among other things, a couple of conventional witches taking off on slightly raggedy broom sticks.

So frequently one runs across the observation that the charm of the sea stems in large part from the fact that, because of ever changing lights, it never appears twice the same. It is patent, of course, that the same can be said in equal thrth of landscapes but this doesn't seem to be remarked so frequently, perhaps because we never find time when not on ship board to remark on the endless varieties induced by atmospheric changes on familiar surroundings.

Today's sunshine brought mostly Texans today, people skipping down to New Orleans to what purpose I know not.. There were people from Dallas, Fort Worth and Austin today, and although none of them had been here before, all of them had heard about Marie Therese and were anxious to see her home. The lady's name appears to be gaining currency,



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and after one husband and wife mentioned that they had read about her in Harnett Kane's Plantation Parade, I found myself wondering how they really learned of it and concluded they had perhaps run into a Christmas program in town, read the Melrose article and somehow super-imposed one bit of information on the backdrop of earlier particulars they had digested.

clipping regarding Mr. Pringle death which Celeste handed me today.

Yesterday came a carton of records, supposedly containing a variety of poems written by and recorded by Robert Frost. The first one I tried was good, the second and third equally so, since each disk contained in the carton was a duplicate of the others. These must have been made for commercial purposes, since they do not state in the recording what the subject matter is. There was one short poem which I thought rather different from the usual Frost line. It ran something like this:

Provide - Provide

The witch that came, the withered hag,  
To wash the steps with pail and rag,  
Was one the beauty, Abesheid,  
The picture pride of Hollywood,  
Too many fall from grace and good,  
For you to doubt the likelihood,  
Die early and avoid the Fate,  
Or, if pre-designed, to die late,  
Make up your mind to die in state:  
Make the whole stock exchange your own,  
If need be, occupy a throne,  
Where nobody can call you crone.  
Some have relied on what they knew,  
Others on being simply true,  
Some have relied on what they knew,  
Others on being simply true,  
What worked for them, might work for you.  
No memory of having starved,  
Makes up for later disregard,  
Or keeps the end from being hard.  
Better to go down dignified  
With boughten Friendship at hour side  
Than none at all.....Provide -- Provide.

A telephone call interrupted the above in the middle and I am under the impression I may have repeated a couple of lines, but the point of quoting the thing was to cite the rather striking word combinations which somehow I never associate with Robert Frost.

And now I must tuck in the somewhat rought clipping

1113

6410

Sunday, November 22nd, 1953.

Memorandum: The week end turned out alright, although it turned out rather differently than I had anticipated.

Joe Henry had not been expected from Texas, but he came Saturday morning and remained until this afternoon. Pat Henry who was expected didn't arrive. At supper tonight J. H. said Pat probably remained in Washington to be with his girl friend there but that he had better hurry along as there was a letter in the Post Office awaiting him from some girl in England.

Saturday dawned drizzling which delighted me, since drizzles usually mean no pilgrims. But the day turned out different for one of the Reverend Fathers from across the river brought another Reverend Father from Hatchitoches, just arrived to that post from Philadelphia. The latter seemed quite intelligent. Just as they were firing to leave, Mr. Sturgeon of Washington or Chevy Chase (same thing, as Miss Cammie would arrive). The Sturgeons usually make a round every two years. The husband said the wife and a Mr. Anderson were at the big house, with Mr. Anderson anxious to have a tour. We accordingly said Au Revoir to the Reverend Fathers and under a little tour. On reaching Yucca once more, however, we found that Mrs. Combs and Mrs. Irwin had arrived, which afforded a pleasant little conversation piece for the other guests, during which the heavens opened and the deluge, although brief, was impressive.

The Sturgeons had once taken my advice and called on little Miss Alberta in New Orleans. They had planned to have her visit them in their home in Ohio when she made her summer go-up that way but suddenly her letters ceased and as none of them ever came back, they were at a loss to understand the silence. Isn't it odd Miss Alberta's nephew never advised them of her death? They, the Sturgeons, were so happy that they had acquired some Kinsey canvases on their last visit.



0113

6411

Today dawned cloudless and although there was a brilliant sun all day, it never got much above the 50's. Tonight seems a little hazey and cool, but the clouds are so thin that the moon has no difficulty in penetrating the gauze. The clear skies pre-supposed pilgrims of course and none came, --that is none that I saw although I must confess that a couple of times I caught a glimpse of figures through the banana stalks that looked very much like something of the sort, but I had things I wanted to do and so beat as brisk a retreat as I could make.

Tonight, after supper across the fence, I saw my first television program. I must say the "how of it" is miraculous. But the program was nothing but trash but even so, it was sufficient in its display of this phenomenon of pictorial transmission by wave lengths to make me tell again what I have so often voiced about radio, --who can doubt the promise of heaven when such unbelievable earth can be contrived by man.

Last night I read "The Jungle and the Damned" by somebody Davis. A 1953 recording, I believe. It had to do about an exploration trip up some river in French Guiana to the frontier of Brazil and it all sounded terrific, so far as "The Damned" section was concerned. I was quite a piece about Devil's Island which coincided with much Christian had told me of the region when he stopped there on his way to Bogota or some such place. The population seems to be Indian, African, murders and nymphs with a sprinkling of indifferent officialdom, and while the author stressed the vast potential wealth of the colony, he unwittingly seemed to underline the fact that local conditions made extracting any of the wealth about impossible. In view of the recent racket about labor troubles or are they political, in British Guiana, made the reading of this volume the more timely. I never this type of book that I do not ponder on the fact that at 450 years civilization through that segment of South America runs so exceedingly thin.

I have listened with particular attention to the troubles besetting the Atlantic Coast atmospherically. It wouldn't be difficult for you to guess where my thought centered and how constantly I have been wondering how little Miss Lee is making it. Perhaps the weather was such that mention was made of it today, - I hope.....

0113

6412

Monday, November 23rd, 1953.

Memorandum: I have been thinking all day how nice it would be if I could only wrap up a dab of the sunshine and invigorating atmosphere to send along to you. My radio reported a momentary break in the Manhattan fog yesterday but I gathered that it had closed in again for another day or so.

Before sun up this morning, when passing the side gate, I noticed one of those vest pocket sized cars of English make parked by the old magnolia. Pat had obviously arrived. I chatted with him over a prolonged cup of coffee at breakfast time. He is out of the army and plans to concern himself with plantation business, I believe. He said he had brought back lots of pictures and would like to talk about this or that place he had explored in England and on the continent. I got the impression that Rome had impressed him considerably. What enchanted me was the fact that what he had seen interested him for somehow this seems to suggest that having gained something from the banks of the Tiber, the banks of the Cane River might profit thereby so far as ancient landmarks are concerned.

I think I mentioned in yesterday's memo that last night I saw my first T.V. program. Aside from all the other impressions I got concerning the wonder of the thing itself, I was wonderfully impressed by the silence that reigned in the room during the dull performance and even the advertising. Somehow I hadn't thought about the silence of a movie theatre obtaining in the private home when T.V. was tuned in. Perhaps this was merely an isolated case in the local set up, I was witnessing the thing for the first time. But possibly it is a custom already established, both here and in a few hundred thousand homes scattered slap across the nation. It will be interesting to contemplate the potentials of this new twist. Probably the radio made vast inroads on reducing the volume of domestic chatter. Perhaps T.V. if carried far enough, will eliminate the Art of conversation, --if any.

But having seen the program, I felt impelled to write Dora, pointing out that when he gets ready to market his product, he might give thought to T.V. What with



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Monday, November 23rd, 1953

little Miss Ramsey graduating shortly from her T V school, perhaps Lora could do business with her, --I doubt, -- and the two of them could round up the Pecane Growers Association to join with the pecane oil thing to do a V film which would incorporate the glories of pecanes generally and pecane oil in particular. I have not much faith in hotels manifesting much interest in the pecane oil, although perhaps restaurants of quality or even of popularity, such as big eastern chains or perhaps the Harvey chain in the Far West might be persuaded to do something about the stuff, although my guess is that it's going to take a great big General Foods or Standard Brands to get behind the thing to make it really roll or ooze or whatever oil does.

Those extraordinary letters on black stationery from Dora were the first bits of information about the product which had come my way and so I know nothing about the set up but I assume Dora is doing some kind of business with the mill which does the crushing of pecanes to produce the oil. Personally, I think that no end of advertising would be required to make the general public pecane oil conscious for apparently the excellence of an ingredient is no sign it is going to enjoy any demand, unless, of course, it gets a big boost by incessant advertising. Naturally, I have no intention of dashing cold water in Dora's direction, but I shall voice an occasional question regarding this or that means of setting forth the article from time to time.

Last night I read a few pages of Julia Bins, or some such "Handbook For the Blind" as read by your friend, A. Scourby. is a book that is made up of good sense concerning the subject although I thought the chapters given over to advise to those who are sighted were perhaps the best. As any one with sense not need to be told the things there related for the most part since relating such things to dumb bells wouldn't cut ice, I'm not sure the book will achieve anything much by way of help to anyone, but it is nevertheless a volume of which the author might well be proud.

I heard Liz Bentley on the radio last night. She said she knew Harry D. White was a spy because the Communist head of her said so. Surely no Communist would ever tell a falsehood.....

5113

6414

Tuesday, November 24th, 1953.

**Memorandum:**

Another elegant day with dazzling sunshine and a fairly brisk breeze that has tended to toss the banana leaves from their moorings.

Today's mail was fairly heavy but nothing of much interest, sample enclosures of which will attest.

The package from la Storm came in today's post. I shall not report to her in what condition. Obviously an elephant or some body of equal weight had stepped on the thing as between Hollywood and Melrose with the result that the gourds were smashed and all but one or two nuts she had mentioned had strayed from the package before reaching this point. I am glad that all the gourds appeared to be duplicate of one's I have already numbered in my collection.

A package from Dora contained some shaving lotion from the New Orleans house whose address I got for him from the Segleous. I like a good face lotion and this seems to be it although the scent is so penetrating that it appears to issue through its glass container and all I shall have to do is pass the unopened bottle under my chin and the desired effect will be achieved. This should be a great saving on the part of purchasers since one investment ought to last a life-time but from the producer's economic point of view, so far as repeat sales is concerned, the excellence should prove quite devastating.

Last night I heard the Eisenhower speech on fair play at the Mayflower. I got the impression it was extemporaneous although a slip of the tongue at one point, --when he started to say he was born and then clipped off the born to raised in Kansas, and so I asked Pat if he had seen the performance on TV and he said he had and he thought the President was speaking from notes. I thought it splendid if extemporaneous in spite of a lack of emphasis at the end when the final sentence might well have been omitted.



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But while he spoke against character assassination at the same time he spoke of the confidence in his team, obviously includes his Attorney General and perhaps Joe McCarthy. Perhaps the line quoted in tonight's new from ex Governor Stevenson's speech to the Georgia Legislature is the best summation of the attitude of Republican politicians thus far voiced:

"I like Ike but I don't like what Ike likes."

Mrs. Wood came down this morning to do a little painting, bringing with her an article of some time back from Look magazine, I believe it was, carrying both print picture stories of McCarthy and his somewhat odd assortment of Catholic clergy, economic tycoons, glamour girls in some circles or other of society, Mrs. Marcella Dupont as to whose identity I haven't the slightest notion, Mrs. William Randolph Hearst, Jr., of whom I am equally ignorant, Alice Longworth of whom I have heard tell, as well as one Westbrook Peglar and Vice President Nixon. I am an odd kettle of fish that turns out to be. I shall list to what the maniac has to say tonight but I am hoping the sound of his voice doesn't instill the feeling of horror over his insanity that his last radio appearance provoked. When Helen and her brother, Punkin, came to read the evening, I offered them a gray kitten which had appeared with Grandpa and the Mongolia boys the other day quite unaccountably. Twenty minutes after they had taken it home with them, and while I was talking with Fugabou by the African House, up strode the self same kitten which the Fugabou children had just taken home with them. But Fugabou, being older and wiser than his children in the ways of animals, told me he would tell them how to make the cat stay at their house. It seems the trick is extremely simple, for all one has to do is to snip off a few hairs from the end of the cat's tail and he will. If one buys or otherwise obtains a chicken, however, the method while parallel is slightly different in that instead of cutting off a few tail feathers one merely burns them off and hence forth the bird will always remain at the newly chosen residence. Another generation, I suppose, and these superstitions will have about evaporated but I am glad to have known plantation life during the era when they still persisted.....

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25  
Wednesday, November 24th, 1953.

Memorandum:

It was so lovely early this morning, - pure pale blue with a promise of a sunshine which did, in fact, last all day.

The bacon and eggs and Louisiana coffee seem to have added zest these frosty mornings.

Pat wanted to chat with me over the second cup. He said that he had about made up his mind to forego the practice of law in favor of plantation operation when, Lo! something that happened across the fence last night had brought him up-standing and he wanted to talk about it with me before he had finally decided.

Francois or rather Frances Henry and one of the teachers from college were here for supper last night, after which they went to chat for a while with Celeste and Madam Regard and Pat joined them. Frances remarked to Pat that she had decided either to go into a retreat during the Christmas holidays or to skip over to Cuba - she hadn't decided which, although she was quite sure she would not be here. Thereupon Pat explained that he had brought his several aunts a Christmas present and that since he might not see her again before the holidays, --he is going over to Houston for a few days, --he thought he would go to the store where he had some of the things he had brought home him and bring her her present then and there.

That seemed a good idea all around and so Pat went to the store, bringing back a pair of bracelets or a pair of vases, forget which. To his surprise and to the surprise of the others present, Celeste said: "And where is my present", and everyone laughed, thinking it was supposed to be a humorous question, since it was understood that the presents were for Christmas and that Frances was getting hers because she would be her on the 25th.

But to their further surprise, Celeste became both angry and tearful and quite a scene developed. Pat tried to explain it all to her but she couldn't be convinced or consoled. Eventually the party broke up and Pat returned to the big house feeling



6417

Wednesday, November 24th, 1953.

might dejected and on awakening this morning, about persuaded his own mind that if Celeste felt that way about him, she might be able to cause no end of difficulties for him with J. H. if he became associated with his uncle.

I explained the fact that temperamentally the lady hadn't developed since the age of five and what was quite true, that she was quite fond of him.

I think I convinced him that he was not to put too much value on such episodes, as all of us have experienced such in the past, and like children's whims, they are forgotten as soon as they are pushed aside by some other. But isn't it a pity a person throws away respect and affection by such childishness.

At 9, things got off on the wrong foot when I was told they had been delighted to see Senator McCarthy on T. V. last night. I said I had heard him on the radio. he asked me if I didn't think him wonderful. I said I didn't. The feathers bristled and I was told Father Calahan thought he was one of America's greatest men and "Father Callahan is no fool"

My response was mean; -- "I think he is a bag of the first water, and I am a fool".

"Well, somebody's simply got to save America" came the response. I played the fool a second time and opined that in the hands of the lady, the priest and the senator, I thought the country would somehow survive. I felt like adding, -- "in spite of them".

But the clouds were eventually dissipated and she read me your elegant note to her and I was mighty proud. She was slap happy with it, too, and we all agreed the sketch of 5th A for the design was mighty pretty.

A book came to hand today which I think, from one nibble, going to relish. It is called "Gods, Graves and Scholars" and is by Ceram which, the first line states is a pseudonym for Kurt Marek. It is translated from the German and published by I believe it is about Archology, a subject which for me seems have all the excitement of a Conan-Doyle detective story plus a pleasing content of erudition. I shall probably be talking about it endlessly, once I get into it.. Lord, Lord, how fast I arrived at the end of our little chat for this sitting....

6418

was extracted at the account I found of the German, Pinkleman  
in state of opposition to the project, initiated the setting  
down of chronological files in paper, and quite prematurely  
Thursday, November 26th, 1953.

**Memorandum:** Blue skies, dazzling sunshine, a brisk, chill breeze and sounds from the gin buzzing all day,--such was this year's Thanksgiving. You could toss in a few pilgrims, too, just to keep the record straight.

For I never fail to remark upon the phenomenon that while all business houses are closed on Thanksgiving Day in Louisiana, the white people indulge in the national habit of over eating on turkey while the colored people apparently never do anything at all about the day. The plantation worked as usual and nobody seemed to consider the holiday as anything more than some peculiarity of the white folks. To the negro, the advent of Thanksgiving, I suppose, is not unlike the impression created in our minds when traveling in a remote country or even a nearby state whose holidays we know nothing about. We wake up one morning to find everything at a standstill with festivities perking somewhere in the offing, as to what it is all about, we have the vaguest notion.

And when, locally, it comes around to June 19th, and the negroes frolic from morn' til night and the following dawn, I suppose they must have feelings about us closely akin to those we have toward them on Thanksgiving.

In the honkey tonks up and down the river, the very slightest reason or no reason at all inspires a dance of some kind or a party of sorts, --but not hanksgiving, and if one wasn't quite sure of the indifference of the negro on the point, one would almost assume there was studied disdain, which there isn't.

As I threatened in yesterday's letter, I want to mention my action to the "Ghosts, Graves and Scholars" book I mentioned. I find it wonderful. Last night I got a little way into it and



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was entranced at the account I found of the German, Winklemann in spite of opposition to his project, initiated the setting down of archiologival finds in Pompei, and quite prematurely got himself murdered in Trieste. And the account of Henrich Schieman is brilliantly presented as the account of such a fa person should be. And the presentation of the Egyptologist, Champollion is euilly masterfully presented. The incredible minds of the two latter, their lives and accomplishments so di but so amazing, surpasses almost anything I know of in the ann of biographies since the world started turning. There seems to been nothing about either gentleman that was average and extraordinary minds, possessed by both, plus the luck, especia of Schliemann, makes the tales of the Arabian Nights seem like kindergarten stuff. It is rare enough to find a person who may be turly called a citizen of the world but sometimes it se even rarer that one encounters, as in the case of Champollion, a man of one country who has never been outside its borders, u become, through what miracle I know not, a perfect symbol of the citizenry of another nation. So long did Champollion concentrate on Egyptology that after endless studies of so man Eastern languages and compiling a Coptic dictionary, he final solve the riddle of Egyptian hetroglifics before ever setting foot outside of Grenolbe and Paris, and het in both cities he was referred to as "the Egyptian" and when finally he at lo last found himself on the Nile, and assumed the garb of the country, everyone, including all his acquaintances, took him for a pure child of that fabulous region.

How wonderful it would be if schoolchildren were present with less about military commanders and their exploits and more about Schliemann and Champollion.

Forgive me for going into such raptures on this subject which approaches the bad manners of somebody talking incessant about a personality whom others haven't met. But your knowledge of the above named gentlemen offers me one excuse, f as I recall, you have on occasion referred to Schliemann and you have undoubtedly bumped into the others as well, so I don feel as though I were talking about the man from Mars, and besides, you are the only one with whom I like to "blow off st

Frances, Dan and Pat joined with the rest of us across th fence to attack the great American bird, and it goes without saying that the dinner was delicious. I might add, took that everything about the board was sweetness and light. I hope you accepted dinner out and after stuffing endlessly, fou moments for rest and relaxation.....

1340

6420

Friday, November 27th, 195

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Monday letter in today's

I am quite sure that J. H. will be delighted to the clippings you so thoughtfully sent along for hi saw him at supper but as there were several guests, not get to mention them to him until just as he was returning to his office when I handed them to hi he asked me to say thanks to you on his behalf.

I can well imagine how the atmospheric situatio your neighborhood snarled up the week ends to nobody satisfaction. I had followed the weather reports fr that quarter with some care and had concluded that w things as they were, there might be a lessening of g about over the week ends.

Everything will be so hurly-burly from here on out through the impending holidays and there will be many must letters to be knocked off to Europe and al that I hope you will not attempt putting yourself th so far as this quarter is concerned. If an occasion card were to come, it would just by itself indicate all was well and I shall look forward to an old fash chat sometime after the present turmoil has subsided

I am thankful that you didn't get a raft of students to clutter up the Thanksgiving Day, although what you did have was undoubtedly super-abundant. Do I pray, employ any chance moment of freedom to relax full well that I understand perfectly just how thing are mounting up as between now and the first of the

I just took a squint at this page and discover contrived am might curious margin, - and withal, am generous. I charge it all off to endless pilgrims w up the place without spaces to pause, as between hign noon and first dark, but some days are like that.



6421

I'm so glad you mention the General's birthday as I have to write him a little note tonight and shall be glad to refer to his recent natal day celebration. And thanks, too, for telling me why the date is of parti significance to you. I am a poor hand at remembering su dates. In the family, for instance, the only one that was easy for me to keep in mind as that of Madame Mere who in a way seemed to have been cheated in that hers ca on December 25th, - a date which everyone could easily f in view of all the other excitement revolving about that date but which, so far as I was concerned, was about the easiest of all natal days to remember.

Returning to "Gods, Graves and Scholars", I read wit interest about the plundering of the Egyptian tombs. Wi knowing much about it, I had always assumed that such business had gone on sometime during the past hundred ye perhaps early in the 19th century, associating the grave robbing, I suppose, wit the beginning of the excavation the archiologists, but the robbing done by marauders. A least I assumed that the violation of the tombs had take place sometime after the Romans had relinquished their h on the Nile as that the plundering probably took place d th past 1,500 years by roving bands of non-Egyptian peop . I was accordingly surprised to learn that actual ly the p took place almost immediately after the burial of a Phar was known to everyone by the time Egypt was actually cmo into its greatest glory. The pyramids had been built by early dynasties and were constructed in such a way as to make finding the burial place almost impossible to locat priests or those engaged in the building did not partici in the desecration. The treasure was so great that huma beings could not resist the temptation to despoil the to And the Kings, recognizing this fact when Egypt was comi into its Zenith, they had to make a radical decision, -- give up pyramid building and fashion hidden spots, difficult to discover. A case is cited of one of the to of a contractor or superinte dent of buildings, who had scribed in his tomb that only he knew the whereabouts of the Pharaoh's tomb, all the workmen engaged in its construction having been murdered as soon as it had bee completed. Some honest priests, to guard the remains of Kings, actually moved them from their first resting plac tombs which had already been desecrated, thus to out wit the plunders, and offna whole flock of royal sarcophagi eventually come to rest in a single place designed for b Lord, Lord...so much to specualte about.....

6422

Sunday, November 29th, 1953.

Memorandum:

It somehow seems like ages since our last little chat on Friday night. I can think of nothing in particular, such a major events, to make Time appear to have been stretched to any unusual degree, but still it seems like ages.

I enclose a sample of the stationery which came to hand Saturday's post from la Storm. It seems quite smart but frankly, I am so used to larger envelopes that the sample enclosed seems so tiny. One virtue it possesses, so far as the writing paper is concerned, it tends to make me shorte up my epistles a little and that may prove to be advantageous to the Storm set up and I believe that they will be the ones who will receive the bulk of what is in the package. I may eventually use one in writing a letter to Robina, but that will be about the sum and substance so far as its circulation goes. You will, of course, dispose of the sample at your convenience.

On Saturday I witnessed a fine example of ineptitude whi demonstrates a failure of understanding or a sense of nicety the part of a couple of people. Charlie, Celeste's darhund, disappeared last week. J. H., to fill the void, told Celeste he would get her another dog and said it would be a Boxer, if is what she wanted this time. And then he proceeded to do ju the wrong thing, for instead of having her select a dog herse he telephoned the Winks, asked them to buy one that would cost around fifty dollars, and to send it down by the boys wh could ride with a Shreveport intern who comes to practice on Cloutierville patients on Saturday. In the first place, I thi Celeste should have chosen her own dog and in the second plac the Winks should have been the last people in the world to do the selecting.

And so when I passed by at the coffeee hour on Saturday, dog had arrived. It was spotted and not the solid color Cele had wanted but she said she would always love it. She, Madam and I were talking dog while we stopped our coffee when the



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second ineptitude transpired, for quite casually, Celeste said:

"I told J. H. to put off getting a dog at just this time when we readily don't need one. After all, Mother won't be here long and as soon as she dies, I had had in mind to select a dog to take her place when I am alone."

You could have knocked me down with a fender. I suppose that is what is known as talking without thinking or some such. Poor Madam Regard. who or what?

I finished the Ceram volume last night and could readily plough through it a second time. The final part of the book is devoted to Mexican archiology and mention is made of several pyramids almost within the city limits of Mexico. I suppose the ruins of Chi-chenitza, - the Lord knows how they are situated an hour or so from the city, and I gather they stem from early 1400, but on the opposite side of the Mexican capitol, there is a Mount Alban pyramid, partially covered by lava and the author says the geologists have estimated that the lava is about 8,000 years old, which, if true, would make the Mexican pyramid ante date even the oldest known civilization in the Near East, such as the ruins of Ur and so of the early Assyrian mounds. Such data somehow makes Greece Rome appear like something out of last week's tabloids.

The radio this morning spoke of the publication of the Diary of Harold L. Ickes and from what was quoted, I gather that gentleman took a swing at everybody, except, perhaps, himself. As I recall, the broadcast quoted him as remarking that Mrs. Roosevelt dabbled too much in the Federal agencies, especially housing and although I do not recall the exact quotation, it was something to the effect that "after all, it was F. D. R. and not Mrs. Roosevelt who was elected President. And come to think of it, the same might be said regarding Mr. He was of course appointed by the President as Secretary of the Interior but, for all I know, Mrs. Roosevelt had the nod from her husband on many occasions when, through her efforts, stacks of red tape was cut through and a heap of good things were accomplished with dispatch. Whether she helped hindered is one question but regardless of the answer, I can imagine the seasoned politicians must have loathed anyone who dared to drive straight to a point without giving the politicians to go their own and often leisurely way. Mr. I could always turn a telling phrase, however, no matter where and the McArthur observation seems to be a case in point....

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Monday, November 30th, 1953.

Memorandum: How nice to find your Wednesday letter in today's post, and how pleasantly warm I felt all about my heart as I read your genuine, generous thoughts. Surely this is a time for Thanksgiving and how wonderful it is when the expressions on the part of one seem to voice the sentiments of the other as the glow from the heart of one seems to but mirror a like circumstance in the heart of the other.

And may I thank you for enclosing the clipping about the pecanes and for the addresses. I shall pass the latter along in a letter responding to one from Dora today which, --the Dora letter I shall enclose herewith. How fortunate that both yours and Dora's came in the same post.

I suggest you pay no attention to his request for the Restaurant Book, for I think he is off the track on that line. I shall mention when writing to him, however, of your kind offer to send him the Red Book.

What is particularly fortunate about the receipt of your addresses of Standard Brands is the fact that I have recommended to him that the release of his product most probably could be best achieved through the medium of some such organization as Standard Brands, General Foods or some such organization having all the paraphernalia for launching an educational campaign as to the virtues of the product. I recommended his consideration at the same time to the possibility of interesting some big advertising agency which, as has been done in other products, the agency itself would join in trying to market the product on a percentage basis. I am still quite in the dark as to what Dora's set up is, -- but I assume he is handling the marketing of the product for some manufacturer of the oil and I further assume the manufacturer has no money to put on a tremendous nationwide educational effort.

With one of the addresses you mentioned being not too far from Norman, perhaps Dora will find it worth while to communicate with that office.

Returning to the clipping about the pecanes, I am not sure if I mentioned that although this year's pecane crop is fairly large, the quality by and large is poor, the fruit not filling out well with the shell because of the prolonged drought. I think most of



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the Melrose crop, for instance, went to some manufacturers of product in which pecanes are used in flavoring, --the meat being chopped up, about all of the sacks sent out to retail people contained pecanes acquired in some suction of the country which had suffered less from the dry spell and therefore had better quality to offer.

I think J. H. is so wise in seeing to it that all such merchandise is always of top quality, regardless of whence it must be sought to be packed into Melrose sacks.

And may I thank you for setting me straight as to the location of Harry Carmen's birth place. I know the region quite well so far as having visited through that neighborhood on occasion, -- especially the environs of Saratoga Springs where I used to visit Yaddo, the George Foster Teabody estate hard by Saratoga Springs. But somehow the Carmen birth place eluded me and I am so glad to be set s on that point. I hope the tracking down of its geographical situatio did not cause too much effort. I want to drop Dr. Carman a line and I am glad I did not do so before receiving your letter for knowing where his home was, I find I want to ask him about a couple of historical points that transpired in that neighborhood, - and it would not have occurred to me to do so, had it not been for the information you supplied.

You mention having received the festival program. It appears the Melrose thing in that is being read by quite a few people, for the program has been rather widely circularized. Today's for example, two people from Dallas and two other from Oklahoma City passed this way, both of the two sets having mentioned that they had read th Melrose article in the program. I did not ask them where they obtained copies but I am sure it must have been in some travel agency or Chamber of Commerce office of their home towns. Of one thing I am certain, they didn't obtain them in the Hatchitoches Chamber of Commerce office, for at 4 o'clock this afternoon, Celeste telephoned to say that Carmen Breazeale, Secretary, and some body else, President Mayor Frank Keys of Hatchitoches, were all three about to come over the air from Monroe on a TV program and would I drop by for a look and listen at them. This I did, and as this was not a transcr thing, I take it the local Chamber must have been closed today. Naturally they were expounding the delights awatng the public on next week end in Hatchitoches, which will mean more people to read more programs, I suppose. It was so nice hearing from you and may I say thanks again for all and all.....

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Tuesday, December 1st, 1953.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your post 'hanksgiving Day letter in today's post. It goes without saying that I was filled with enchantment to learn of your impending evening at the theatre, and I shall be all ears to learn how it all turned out. As you point out, no matter how indifferent the piece in which the artist of his calibre appears, it is bound to be entrancing, just as in the case of the talking books which, if they recorded a telephone directory, would still delight me if read by your friend, Alexander Scourby.

And may I thank you for all the nice things you had to say about Dr. Butler, little Miss Lee and others. It made my heart glow. And I was touched by what you had to observe about Stephen Zweig. I had never thought of it before that moment, but as suggested or implied by your letter, perhaps the reason we find him provid- ing such wholesome food for the soul is because he is one of those unique persons who seems to be able to echo the very thoughts which we have exchanged on so many different topics from time to time.

And may I thank you for telling me about the margins. As you are the only person who sense how much I value such advise, and as it is upon your thoughtfulness I lean in setting me straight when I inadvertently or unknowingly get off the path, I enjoy such a feeling of security in communicating with others because of your thoughtfulness and generosity in taking the pains to help me back of the right track. Often I realize I am mis-spelling words, too, and whenever you notice such errors, whether they be the ones I sense or others, I shall count it a great kindness on your part if you will acquaint me with these particulars so I may not feel too shame-faced when I wonder, and cannot find out, since I have no dictionary, when writing letters to others. In letters addressed to little Miss Lee, I gallop along unthinkingly of such considerations, realizing that no matter how strangely the words spell out, she will get a smile out of them and not mind, but it is only to her that I can write with such abandon, and just knowing that I shall be given a ray of light when needed provides a marvelous sense of security.



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As I turn this page, I might as well remark that the machine is beginning to make a tin like sound with each whack at the keyboard and so it is quite possible the whole thing will suddenly come to a hup or may fall to pieces completely. If the termination is unusually abrupt, therefore, you will not be alarmed. I have already made the envelope so I can send whatever fragment comes through alright.

I am so glad you passed along the several pieces of news concerning the different members of the family and in-laws who seem to have had quite a variety of adventures of late. I like to keep up with them, feeling as I do, that everything happening to them invariably mirrors itself on you, since the association with one of them is so close, both figuratively and physically.

You ask about Kay's reference to Yucca copies, -- although the precise word she used escapes me. She was referring to a point I mentioned in a recent letter to them wherein I inquired something about someone they knew in Lake Charles, that friend living not far from the Chalkleys, in whose neighborhood a citizen had the architect Partridge, build a house after the plans of the architect's own domicile, which, in turn, was a copy of Yucca. I have perhaps mentioned years back when Mr. Partridge spent some time here, measuring most minutely the features of Yucca which he reproduced for himself in Lake Charles. Somebody in Texas, -- I forget just where, did the same thing and only a short time back somebody wrote from Dallas, asking for the plans for this house which they wished to reproduce for the mother of the writer of the letter. This must have been what Kay's reference was about. Today's in-coming mail was quite heavy but I had so many interruptions at just the wrong time that I glanced through nothing except your letter and that of Robina's. The latter, being long hand, posed a little difficulty for my secretary and I should like to read it again but there are so many other things that will pile up when tomorrow's is added to today's that I shall never get around to go into it and so I shall enclose it herewith, although I think it contains nothing of particular interest. Still I feel you like to keep in touch with such friends regardless and so I send it along.

Already people from thither and you are beginning to threaten visitations this week end on their way to or from the festivities in town. It will be so nice when the fireworks begin exploding and they will all be there and I shall be all here.....

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Wednesday, December 2nd, 1953.

Memorandum:

May-I tell you that, looking as pert as a peacock, the newly planted freeshias are already out of the ground and giving the slightest hint that they are going to pay the slightest heed to the weather report that speaks of a cold blast sliding down from the Canadian Rockies. This evening I put them under glass, just to be sure that Jack Frost wouldn't find them napping but I feel instinctively that the spanking breeze from the Gulf is likely to put a road block in the pathway of Herr Frost, effectively preventing him from reaching here on the present go-round.

Carmen Breazeale telephoned me today to report on the telecast from Monroe the other day. She said that the TV station representatives had come to Hatchitoches today, explaining that the station had received more telephone calls from the region it serves, following Monday's telecast, than any previous program, in view of which it had been decided that a film would be made on Saturday, covering the festivities, -- parade, fireworks and so on, and the same would be put on the air on December 11th. I assume this means additional pilgrims from all around who will journey to Hatchitoches to view the lights during the holiday season. The film and the tape recording used for the telecast will be presented at the Monroe station to the Hatchitoches Chamber of Commerce so it may be used at any time in the future, all of which seems neighborly and nice.

Ora telephoned me today, too. She said she wanted to remark on something which had impressed her during the Thanksgiving holiday when plenty of people of her age and plenty of youths and maidens of her daughter's age, had dropped in. So often, she said, she feels called upon to explain the Hunter canvases that grace her dining room to the of her generation who somehow don't seem to get them at first glance what astonishes her is how all the college boys and girls, after taking one glance at them, immediately express their enchantment and obviously comprehend them utterly and love them. Naturally I see no parallel between Beethoven and Wagner in relation to la Hunt and yet as Ora was speaking, my mind wandered back to Little Marcel's observation that it required about a generation to intervene between the time Beethoven set forth his music and an audience that would appreciate it. What I wonder is, were there a few people in Beethoven's even as there was Louis, duc de Baviere, in Wagner's, who comprehended creations at the time they were brought forth and if little Marcel was only partially right in his assumption that a generation must elapse true appreciation set in.



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"Sweet olive was originally named olive de la chene chinensis of the leaves which were so like those of the olive tree of the orient. Then, during the Civil War, what the Yankee blockade of Southern ports made dwellers jealous of their British tea, a substitute tea was made from the pudding foliage leaves of our schrub, which then known as the Tea Olive. Later generations sometimes called it sweet olive, but it is all the same shrub whose little flower still fills us with delight when it is blooming."

The above quotation is quite a hodge-podge which in spots seem wonderfully confused, but I quote it, as read off to me by a secret who obviously was having difficulty with the writing. But in view of your mention of sweet olive in your last letter, I thought this might be pertinent and I have searched the gardens for bushes that would still have some flowers from the blooming just before the last frost, but I could find little or nothing. But what did come to hand, I am enclosing herewith so that you may get some vague notion of the smallness of the flowers in relation to the leaves. The bushes bloom off and on all during the year, and hundreds of them on a bush, perhaps thousands, produce an aroma that is wonderfully sweet and powerful. There is a bush on the white garden side of Yucca, before the West room that balances the Chapel on the East. Oddly enough, the front gallery of Yucca is frequently heavily perfumed by a big old bush that grows, -- of all places, way over by the gallery of little Miss Albe house. When the morning air is heavy, the wind from the East, this bushes makes a perfect trail of perfume all the way from the Studio across the greensward in front of the African House and on to the Yucca gallery. You may recall a couple of the smaller bushes which stand just to the right and left of the big house, -- one on each side of the brick walk, the bushes touching the brick pillars of the gallery. From your room, one can look at them, for they are now up to the top of the bannister of the upper gallery. I don't recall if you have a photograph of the house showing these, and if you do, the photograph was probably taken some years back. As I recall, Miss Cammie and Dora got these in LeCompte along about 1943 when they drove down that way to a nursery.

I think of you so many times during these days, especially in the morning and evening when you usually would be grabbing for your favorite newspaper. It seems to me I recall Manhattan once with newspapers and it did seem odd. I thought Martin LeGronski hit the nail on the head this morning when he remarked that when "I find myself on the street and suddenly realize I am not clutching my newspaper, I feel positively undressed". I can imagine the magazines must be enjoying an unusual vogue at the moment, especially with the subway veterans.....

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Thursday, December 3rd, 1953.

Memorandum:

The day began early and was busy until nearly 7 tonight.

I was astir at five o'clock. It was raining rather hard and a brisk breeze was blowing. I usually get news at that hour and the Alexandria station advised people to pay no attention to the rumor of tornadoes, pointing out that the weather bureau would have advised if anything of the sort were in the offing. As he spoke, I heard the unmistakable roar of a twister which seemed to be passing South of Melrose. Ten minutes later, the same announcer interrupted a musical thing to say he had been mistaken and that a tornado was reportedly blowing down houses between Hatchitoches and Alexandria. Several were blown down, in fact, several miles to the East and South of this neighborhood but not a shingle was disturbed either at Melrose or Arenbourg. In town several chickens were smashed by flying coops and some people were killed somewhere further to the East. We were certainly lucky in this particular region.

The State photographer, - Gasquet, or some such name and his wife appeared at noon. By then the sun had peeped through and the balance of the afternoon was cloudless, as it is tonight.

But hard on the heels of the photographer and his wife came Blythe with Mary Pringle and two of the latter's sisters. Blythe had apparently taken them directly to my house while the photographer and I were in the African House, and Blythe was dragging some strange looking things behind her which I did not recognize until she was quite close. When she showed me what she had. She had cut my banana crop and planned to use the banana bunches for some floral decoration she is going to use.

I had thought when I got around to cut them, I would hang them in the chapel as chandelieres, as in the past, but the Chapel will have to do without such decors this season.

May Pringle had many things to talk about some of them interesting which can be gone into later. In September I had asked her to execute a bit of porcelain for me according to design, - nothing of any particular moment but something I had in mind for



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the holiday season. I gathered that she has progressed as far as might have been expected under the circumstances that developed when her father became ill and eventually died. What she apparently has in mind is to present this or that thing to me at Christmas time, which, if true, will knock my plans slap out, but she is doing her best to be kind and if I am the only one whose Christmas plans go awry, that will certainly be remarkable.

It's an interesting fact that in spite of all the feelers I put out for a dusky hand about to clutch a delicate boll of cotton, no one as yet has turned up.

Fortunately, I selected a number of first rate examples of cotton bolls before the rains came and loosened the lint into banners and as May had not undertaken the cotton boll paper weight model as yet, I was able to send these along with her when she left. We shall see what -- if anything -- comes of that.

Blythe said that after three months, the bandage had been taken from her brother's eyes and he is delighted that he can see with one, the other being gone completely. He is even able to read, as I understand it which is wonderful. He cannot do any manual work, however because of his diabetic condition.

Last night's rain and this morning's breeze must have taken about all the pecanese from the trees and I assume much money was made by the pecanese gatherers who were paid for their labors tonight. One result of the presence of this easy money is a great racket from up honkey-tonk way where every ten seconds or so for the past couple of hours the popping of fire crackers has been going on. I must sub-consciously associate the bang of big fire crackers with the discharge of rifles which seems appropriate enough for the celebration of some nationalistic thing but never will this racket fit in with anything I can imagine as appropriate or having anything to do with the Christmas season. And, oddly enough, I don't recall ever hearing fire crackers used in this region to punctuate the celebration of the 4th of July. Once, perhaps, the calendar slipped a cog covering six months and simple never did get back in line with the natural customs of the people. That sounds mighty lame as an explanation but it seems to be the only one I can come up with.

As I was leaving the big house tonight, Juanita asked if she could talk with me for a moment. She said her daughter, Emma-lee wanted to talk with me some time. Her marriage is going along alright but she is wondering if she should go back to school. I shall work in a conference with her tomorrow between Madam C. Vernon Cloutier, fine feathered friends from New Orleans and some Mississippi gentry, so the afternoon. And now for some correspondence and thence to bed.....

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Friday, December 4th, 1953.

Memorandum: I had a very good time at the tour.

A cloudless sky today enabled every mother's son and daughter, not to mention the grandparents to boot, to round up pecanese all over the place, - what with yesterday's high winds having brushed off everything depending from the pecanese branches, including the nests of the orioles.

Beth Cloutier was supposed to bring some of her fine feathered friends from South Louisiana, --week end guests, for a tour. The magical hour for the appointment was 3:30 and she arrived promptly --at 4:10. I tried to engineer her into staying at Celeste's but she was determined to go on the tour, and, of course, succeeded in making it about half as good as she and Sister alone could succeed in doing, for they are, in some respects, wonderfully alike.

For instance, one of the guests, admiring the big oak, asked me if I had any idea of its age. I told them Miss Cammie had often spoken to me of having planted it in 1904.

"You're mistaken on that point", Beth put in. "I am sure it is the only one error you will make about the whole place, but you are wrong about that, for Miss Cammie always told me she planted it the week after J. H. was born...."

Just as though it mattered to begin with, but then, in the midst of something else, she interrupted to say:

"Oh, come to think about it, you were certainly right about the tree being planted in 1905, for now I remember she told me she did plant it in 1905 wheny Paynie, not J. H. was but a week old, a I remember quite well, for that was the year, I, too, was born and I always remember that the tree and I are the same age."

What an insult to the oak, for at least it never gets into my act.

So much for Madam Beaufort, and she certainly isn't worth it.

After the tour, Celeste who had gathered in the Reverend Fathers Dee Hertzog, served champagne and it was all awfully Harper's Bazaar with much gay embers in the fire place to counter-balance the iced drinks and so on. I swallowed my go-round with alacrity and



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beat a retreat as quickly as convenient, pleading a desire to catch up with a secretary whom I did hope to round up but never did. Fortunately today's post was light, so it didn't matter either way, but I was delighted to have an excuse to leave the field to the others.

Pre-Beaufort pilgrims today included people from Illinois and from Wisconsin. The latter voiced the thought that their junior Senator is one of the saviors of the nation. Imagine.

And speaking of that gentleman, I was mildly surprised tonight when Ed. Morrow reported that McCarthy had issued a statement, saying the White House had not given the correct number of telegrams received by Mr. Eisenhower concerning the subject on which the Senator had recommended people were. This ought to give the commentators a chance to ask how the Senator knows how many telegrams the President receives and what the nature of their contents may be. Can you imagine the racket McCarthy would make if anyone else made such a statement. It appears that only the Senator is immune from investigation, doesn't it.

I heard Frank Edwards a night or two ago quote from the letter written by some executive of an oil concern to his home office, asking "how can we get rid of Martin Legronsky and Frank Edwards". On the strength of that, I yesterday wrote Station KALB, Alexandria, asking why the Legronski program had been cut off the air without any explanation and remarking with some satisfaction that the response wasn't very important to me since I could get his program at the same time on another station.

My attention was directed by telephone today to an item which is said to appear in some column on the front page of the Times. It is thrown in with a flock of other paragraphs but, had it carried a headline, might have, I suppose, run something like:

Elusive,  
or

"Difficult of access".

I shall try to secure the clipping of the sentence for you, but in the mean time, here is the gist of it:

Manager Cox of the Southern Bell Telephone Company here contacted the Chamber of Commerce to get the telephone number of Eestan at Melrose.

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Sunday, December 6th, 1953.

Memorandum:

Last night was the fireworks in Natchitoches, after a busy day of parades and hoop-la in town, and ample numbers of pilgrims at this bend of the river. The last of mine departed after dark and at 7:30 or 8, I was entranced just to sit in the quiet of the gallery giving on the White Garden, Grandpa on my lap, and gaze at the beauty of the Great Bear swining high above the bamboo hedge. Off to the North and a little to the West, the star spangled heavens were dimmed by the glow of lights while off to the North East a peculiar glow of an unending flare of heat lightening out did the Natchitoches horizon. I could hear the explosion of bombs bursting in air from the Northwest but no sound at all came from the Northeast.

A little later when I had turned on the radio, I learned that the mid section of Vicksburg had been devastated by a tornado at about the time I had been enjoying the unusual lighting effects to the West and East of North.

Lord, Lord, what a spectacle when the Illinois Fireworks Company and God put on a show concurrently.

I enclose a postcard from Saturday's post. In view of the scrawl and the cancellation mark, this unsigned message must be from Weeks. I shall respond to his question in the negative regarding possession of a tape recorder. Do you reckon he has an extra one. It might be he wants my opinion as to the value of such a contraption, but of course I wouldn't know, never having used one, but I can well imagine it might save a heap of memory energy if I could get the secretaries to jot down names and addresses on such a contraption. Well, we shall see what we shall see.

A letter from a Dallas lady whom I scarcely know, came through from Mineral Wells where she had gone to "get away from it all". I suppose she is one of those Marie Antoinette numbers who find the wear and tear of bridge parties just too much. She wrote some time back that she had found a Christmas present for me, "something you have always wanted". Imagine. A day or two before Thanksgiving.



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a package arrived. It contained cigarettes. I wrote a prompt note, thanking her and admitting, as a matter of course, that cigarettes were really just what I had always wanted. Mineral Wells comes a note saying that the hanksgiving item wasn't the Christmas one which will be forwarded at some appropriate date. I'll let you know when and if it arrives and what it contains. Off hand I can think of one thing I have always wanted, --at least for the past 15 years and that is a Sunday without pilgrims and fewer notes from discontented society ladies who have everything but sense. But just how such a wish could be wrapped up in a Christmas package, I wouldn't venture to guess.

The other day you mentioned the etching used in the program of the Hatchitoches festival and on the post cards carrying particulars about this year's pecanes. It was taken from some oil company's publication. I have secured a copy and am putting it in the mail when this memo heads out. Nobody on Melrose ever heard of the etcher and nobody recalls anyone doing etching at Melrose during recent years. I accordingly conclude that this etching must have been inspired by a Sydam and that this composition was stirred up without the artist ever having laid eyes on Melrose. It goes without saying that you may dispose of the magazine as you please. I do not want it back.

I regret to report that my reading machine is beginning to drag its feet, as it were. This means I shall have to try to get it to town one day this week, hoping as I do, that I may have it before too long, --it is such a mighty refuge at the end of the day.

In a way, the absence of a reading machine for me must approximate in some respects your own sense of loss in the matter of the newspapers. Who ever would have supposed this period of the silent presses would have lasted so long. I recall the old days when newsboys at 5th Avenue and 42nd Street used to hawk Huey P. Long's Hammond, La., sheet. I suppose they might do almost as much business now as then, and how is it the Texas oil millionaires backing McCarthy haven't set up a sheet for that scoundrel and got them into circulation at this moment when there would be so little competition. Well, Lord, so plays out the week end, and I hope you got at least a moment of rest and relaxation.

6436

Monday, December 7th, 1953.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your gay note this morning, tucked in with your most ample package. May I tell you how entranced I am with the whole business.

And how surprised and delighted I was to find Lestan on Madame de Pompadour's door step. That antediluvian likeness had faded from my mind and I was frankly taken aback with surprise and delight when I encountered it. I had opened your package before any secretaries had shown up and had placed your note in my folio before they arrived, and then had turned to the contents of the package. Dora has mentioned something about a photo and I think this will delight him. Perhaps la Storm might like one, too, and I am under the impression that perhaps somebody like Madam Marco might get a mild kick out of one of the smaller ones. Thus has not only my day been made the happier but pleasure has been rounded up in advance for a number of friends who, thanks to your thoughtfulness, will find an extra element of gaiety at Christmas time when this souvenir of the old days comes to hand. It would be impossible for me to say hanks, but somehow I have a feeling I scarcely need try since you and only you have any idea.

The fireworks week end continued into last night when J. H. and Celeste went to an oyster supper at the J. H. Williams camp somewhere on Cane River not too far from town, --on old Teana plantation I believe. But such frivolity didn't keep Celeste from heading out early for a day in Alexandria and so I had coffee with Madam Regard this morning and she asked me if she couldn't clip out of the paper, --Thursday, December 3rd, 1953, of the Hatchitoches Times, the line which I had mentioned in a couple of memos back. She didn't include the date, of course, and naturally I didn't want to spoil her happiness in doing this for me. Besides it is quite possible it may not be convenient for you to do other than toss it into the basket. After all, we have had our laugh over the thing, but I must say I still find it mildly amusing.

The enclosures from Lora speak for themselves. I am



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writing him tonight, now that I have a little more understanding of the set up in which he labors.

My thought to him will be to the effect that restaurants are indifferent to the superlative food values of his product, being primarily concerned with serving food that is passable and vaguely satisfying to casual customers. That is why from the beginning I felt that something like Standard Brands would have to push the wholesome qualities of the oil if it could ever make a dent in any demand, --wholesale or retail.

And so I shall point out to him that in my opinion, he would do better to skip restaurants for the moment at least until he has tried another toe hold --through a channel that might eventually draw the restaurants into line. In short, I shall recommend that he get the inside track with first one and then a succession of large hospitals where food probably receives more careful attention than any other place of equal size. If his product does have some outstanding attributes, the hospitals ought to grab at it, and if patients can be made acquainted with it through such an avenue, and doctors recognize its virtue, then it ought to be twice as easy to interest restaurants catering to a trade that cultivates the better and more demanding patrons and from hospital to restaurant and thence to one of the big concerns for the retail trade, what with the or a hospital use of the product being a wonderful advertising point for a big food house if one should contemplate getting behind it. For if Dora could get some big hospitals to use the stuff in quantity, then, perhaps, with quantity rolling, Flemming or whatever the producers name is might be willing to give Dora a contract to handle their entire output.

Well, anyway, I shall pass this idea along for whatever it may seem to be worth to Dora, and he can reject it easily enough if there are points which make it impracticable.

I neverally fell out of bed last night when, during "Meet the Press", it was remarked by Miss Liz Bentley or one of her questioners, that she is teaching in Louisiana. I asked everybody I knew today about the place and somebody thought it was Southern University at New Scotland, near Baton Rouge, -- the colored college. Lord, have mercy on us, it won't be long now before old McCarthy will be digging up colored spies, I reckon. What will be next.

Thanks, thanks for such a happy day, your note, your package and blessings on you for being so kind to me.....

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Tuesday, December 8th, 1953.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Tuesday-Wednesday letter in today's post, together with the clippings for J. H.

Your week end sounded hurly-burly enough. How is it people can drag out visitations until 11 o'clock at night when they are bound to know that people like you have so many things to do all week long.

But I am glad that somehow you squeezed in a bit of rest, which is the most important thing, and that you even got an opportunity to do a bit of radio-ing, too.

And may I thank you for giving me such an excellent account of your adventure to the theatre. Even as you inquire, so do I ask why it is that good actors get palmed off on such tiresome plays. It seems like such a pity when so many things we know of from the past and so many potential ones of which we know not are available.

Much to my satisfaction, the Henry Adams Opus, "Mont St. Michel and Chartres" came to hand in yesterday's post. I didn't know what the cartons contained until I put page one on the Reading Machine and the familiar voice of your friend, Alexander Scourby, gave the title. I need scarcely add that it was a source of much dissatisfaction immediately thereupon when the machine died -- slap.

Celeste telephoned me last night to say she was going into town this morning and so I jumped at the opportunity and took the machine in and left it with some radio repair shop. I am hoping to learn it is ready by Thursday, and if so, Dr. Knipmeyer will bring it with him which will offer me a wonderful opportunity to exert self control sufficiently to still consider my daily routine, reserving Mont St. Michel and Chartres for after dark consumption.

In town I ran into R. B. Williams who told me a fire at the J. H. Williams' gin at dawn today burned up a dozen bales of cotton.



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Then I ran into Mildred Cunningham who asked me if I didn't want the big Currier and Ives calendar she usually sends me at this season. I said I would, and told her I hoped it had at least one reproduction of Louis Maurer's handiwork. She said the Traveler's Insurance Company of Hartford, Conn., owns the originals of all the several dozen Currier and Ives that they have issued on their calendars during the last few years and that these originals are currently on display at the Delgado or some such in New Orleans. I told her something about Alfie and Louis. That was where I made my mistake. She went on to say that the New Parish Library in Natchitoches is to have a grand opening in a month or so and that she had secured the Currier and Ives originals for a show and that big wigs from the literary and political world were coming for the dedication of the Library, and would I accept an invitation to participate on the platform. I told her she was wrong in getting me there for that, for the big wigs would get all the headlines and nobody would ever hear of Messrs. Currier and Ives. I suggested that she delay for a week the "varnishing" of her show and by doing that she would get a bit of lime light that would be more impressive. She said she would if I would open the show. That's the way people get hooked, I suppose. Well, we shall see.

And imagine my surprise when I learned that Liz Bentley is not teaching at New Scotland for negroes but at Grand Couteau which is the ultimate in the educational field for young ladies and is a Catholic set up to boot, presided over by a Mother superior and all that sort of thing.

Picture my further surprise on reaching home when, by telephone, I was unofficially approached on a pilgrimage date for Liz herself. It seems she is scheduled to speak in Natchitoches later in the season and before making an official request, those in charge of her appearance put out a feeler to see what reception it would get, if Melrose could be persuaded to receive the lady. I responded that Melrose, although privately owned, is or should be considered a national monument and that I didn't care who came. I added, too, and for ample measure, that if they wished while Liz was here, I could take her back on the plantation and show her Carpenter's Village which the F. B. I. investigated on the charge that the poor, untutored negroes there had wireless communications with Moscow. Perhaps smart Liz could induce the Junior Senator from Wisconsin down this way, so the two of them could "make a mountain out of a moth hole". What ever is next is no tellin' but, so far as I am concerned, Liz sits on a tack. So turns this day and I shall look to the radio in lieu of reading. So glad we both heard E. R. M on the newspaper shortage.....

1443

6440

Wednesday, December 9th, 1953.

Memorandum:

James Aswell telephoned this morning, inviting me for lunch and saying he would drive down and pick me up if I would honor them. I told him I would take a rain check on the invitation with a view to some time after the holidays.

He says he has lost 31 pounds and looks as svelt as a sylph. Rosalin chatted a bit, too. She mentioned a somewhat curious letter which James had received in the morning mail. It was from some man in Houston who wrote:

"Dear Mr. Aswell, I have just finished reading your book, "There One in Every Town" and so I am writing to ask you how I can collect eight dollars a man here in Houston has been owing me for more than a year. Yours very truly, etc."

Ho....hum.....

It goes without saying I was altogether delighted to learn on the radio that you would be having newspapers today. Like you, I have been wondering how such papers as The Times will fill in the gap of their files spanning the past 11 days. For history's sake, there certainly should be something inserted to provide future students with what transpired during that interim. I shall be so glad to learn if and how this void was filled in.

What with the matter of scholastic segregation being heard now by the Supreme Court, it occurs to me you might like to have me jot down a couple of impressions of the potentials, as viewed from down this way.

If the Court should rule out segregation, there will of course be unpredictable consequences in the South. I suppose the first reaction, as suggested by South Carolina's Byrnes, will be for the individual States to cut their appropriations for public education with a resulting rise of a rash of private schools.

There are bound to be convulsions in which, I fear, many an innocent child of color will suffer. That will represent the terrible injustice of children's children having to pay the price of their great, great, great, great grandfathers and fathers stupidity.

The white parent in the South will experience plenty of distress



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when he sees the results of sending his privileged child to school with much out-numbering under privileged children. One reason why there are so many under privileged children of color in the South is because there are so many under privileged parents, and until a step forward has been made to correct this condition, -- and the elimination of segregation in the schools is one such step, the condition will drag on and on, just as it has ever since the end of slavery.

As I see it, there are many substantial reasons and an equally vast array of stupid reasons why scholastic segregation should be maintained in order that by maintaining the status quo, a measure of some kind of quiet and peace may continue to operate as of up to now. The same might have been said about the inequities of taxes in France prior to the Revolution. Those who enjoy all the advantages, of course, are inclined to fight to keep the system frozen tight. Those who occupy the less favored brackets of society usually aren't sufficiently equipped to strike a blow for their rights.

It may well be that the white privileged child in the South who suddenly finds himself in schools attended by a great majority of under privileged colored children -- the ways of the white child may sag to nobody's advantage by the contacts for a while. But at the time, the ways of the colored children will automatically begin to improve astonishingly to the end that the true level of all children will vastly exceed the mean height presently obtaining as between the peak of the most privileged and the trough of the least. For myself, I am "holding the thought" that the Supreme Court may smash the segregation business, heavy as I know the immediate toll may be, for in the end, everyone will benefit, and at long last, the oncoming generations in the South will have an opportunity to pay something other than lip service to the 1st Commandment, especially the part about "thy neighbor as thy self".

I have given considerable thought to the consequences that will follow a decision by the Supreme Court and I come to the conclusion I hope the Supreme Court will smash segregation.

Such a thing will work great hardship for colored teachers in part since most of those in the South have never been required to meet the standards of white teachers and probably a vast majority of the colored teachers will find themselves out of jobs. But although the initial woes will be difficult to bear and correct, the results of the operation will justify the use of the knife.

Yesterday's clouds gave way to rain last night and although the sun was bright all day, it remains cool. But the freshias are pushing up wonderfully and, withal, delighting my soul.....

0110

6442

Thursday, December 10th, 1953.

Memorandum:

How nice to find the deftly wrapped, fat box of stationery in the morning's post.

And may I congratulate you on the substantial packing which automatically guaranteed delivery without so much as the vaguest suggestion that it hadn't come slap off the press.

I love the whole thing so much that with this extra supply, I shall feel no qualms at all about using it so much more freely in the numerous letters that flow out of here daily. And the nicest thing about it is that the association of the giver somehow makes me feel that the mail is being tossed off jointly, and if the responses show a measure of pleasure, I feel instinctively that so much of this is due to the fact that two people, not one, were concerned with the writing.

The mail continues rather heavy but will undoubtedly begin tapering off shortly, when letters start being replaced by Christmas cards. I shall send some of the in-coming letters along under separate cover or perhaps in this envelope, if, as I hope, I may be able between now and tomorrow's post, I am able to extract a few addresses from this or that one. From here on out through the holiday period, I shall send anything of immediate interest in the envelope with the day's memo, batching anything else, if there be a quantity, under separate cover, so whenever anything bearing the familiar two pencil marks comes to hand and you are too rushed for trivia, you may file away for subsequent leisure reading, in full knowledge that such envelopes contain nothing of primary importance.

Montana, Washington, D. C. and Dallas figured in the day's batch of pilgrims and with a single exception, it was a pretty dull lot. But those sort of days happen now and then, and the great advantage is that I can whisk the likes of them through the tour so that they land at the front gate again almost before they realize they have entered.

One of my friends, Tom, and his brother are sitting in jail



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after a couple of hundred pounds of pecanes were found in their little cabin, hard by the Indian Mound. The temptation to get extra money over and above that paid by the plantation for gathering the crop is too much some times, but I have always felt that the real scoundrels in the transaction are not those who sell but those crumby hill billies to entice the negroes to sell, for the buyers know well enough where the sellers live and that they are playing the role of fence which is what enables the sale to be consummated. It seems wise, under the prevailing system, to come down hard on the seller who is apprehended but one's sympathy remains regardless.

I was rather astonished to learn at what high stakes are involved in the Black Jack card games that operate all during pecane gathering time. On a good day, a nimble picker rounds up 6 or 8 dollars of recompense for his labors, and, I am told on the authority of participants in the resulting games, that last Friday night, one 19 year old youth won a little over 160 dollars. Another youth with much less luck won but 90. As with gentlemen of lighter hue frequenting the stock exchange, these youths cannot resist the impulse for gains by games of chance, and as in all such efforts, the losses sustained by the other participant who cannot afford to loose is certainly depressing to say the least. They labor a year to arrive at the time when money for clothes and other necessities arrive and then, having rounded up the cash, hazard it on the turn of a card, with one out of a hundred having anything to show for the sweat of their brows.

It goes without saying that I was slap happy today when Dr. Knipmeyer arrived with what appeared to be a week end traveling bag, which turned out to be my reading machine. Having been on the jump all day, and what with several letters to toss off tonight before calling it a day, I find I must exercise the greatest self control in putting off the hour when I collapse in my arm chair and see what A. Scourby, esquire, has to do with the creations of one Henry Adams, also, Esquire.

I can't recall if I mentioned a news broadcast from the Congo a night or two ago, wherein the speaker, mentioning what was going on in Bermuda, referred to it as "La Conference des Invalides" which me as both pert and pat.

But now I must get to my mail, but before so doing, may I say t again and again to you for the happiness brought my way by how today

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6444

Friday, December 11th, 1953.

Memorandum:

It began raining at 4 a.m. and drizzled most of the day. Naturally I was glad. And because I undertook everything in the domestic line that could be "studied up", I feel pleasantly tired tonight and shall probably begin nodding over the Adams opus before the disk has revolved a couple of times.

The day's mail wasn't much but you will find Carolyn's letter interesting. I shall drop her a line tonight, giving her the "Go Ahead" signal.

Naturally I am delighted that the Storm-O'Brien contact has afforded Carolyn so much pleasure during her California stay. And I am twice as glad that she and Erma and Farley have found something to delight them in the Marie Therese story. The importance of that story is not anything Carolyn will do with it, but rather it serves mightily as a foot bridge or gang plank which will provide her with a feeling of strength during the days just ahead when, on returning to Marshall, she will have to begin casting about for something to do.

It is my guess that if anybody does anything about a novel on Marie Therese, that person will be Farley. ut in the mean time thanks to Carolyn, he is interested, --and so will la Storm be, -- and in the mean time the enthusiasm it engenders in Carolyn will keep her afloat until the next enthusiasm enters her orbit.

If Farley ever gets anywhere with Marie Therese he will have another subject served up to him on which he and I will get our heads together. For surely the Slave Prince of Hatcher is something that would send both Carolyn and Farley spinning into the middle of next week if they ever heard of it. But it will be ample time to breathe the story of the Prince after they have completely worn out Marie Therese and you may be sure I shall never bring up the matter until the first enthusiasm has been well worked over.

Off hand, and perhaps because I am a little sleepy, I envision



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both the story of Maria Therese and The Prince as marvelous material for biography, novel and movie for Brazil which long ago got over the racial prejudice if it ever had any. What with the country about to start shaking in its shoes, --it seems so odd nobody seems to sense the implications of the impending Supreme Court decision on segregation, --I can't imagine the United States or any of the English speaking countries, as in anything like a receptive frame of mind for at least another decade or two. That is why I have been glad to get her name into print in the Picayune and Natchitoches papers, for, as in the case of the Black Swan, if the name once gets into print, it will be there and waiting for somebody when people grow up and are capable of seeing the terrific stories involved, no longer blinded by the racial prejudices which prevent them from seeing anything at the moment but the color of the skin and not the tremendous qualities and tragedies being played out before their very eyes. Some day America and the world will wake up to the value of these treasures and there's vast compensation in having been able to have saved them from oblivion and pass them along to those who will be able to do something with the material when the climate of human society enables these characters to thrive in the hearts of men.

Actually, The Brothers Metoyer offer something unheard of in history, what with the one married to the Prudhomme heiress just up the river a piece while the other is married to Marie Therese down the river no further, and a dual story running concurrently of the two households, the differences in sense of values, in capabilities and so on would be staggering. But actualities in this instance are so more fabulous than anyone could imagine for a novel that trying to put palatable trappings on the truth seems the height of folly.

But Lord, what a dull world this is turning out to be. And besides there were a half dozen things I had in mind to talk about when I began it but these all seem to have eluded me.

Celeste find she was never more busy. The Catholic Daughters or the Service League or some such are planning a frolic tomorrow night and as near as I can make out, everyone is wearing herself out in making endless preparations for the thing, - the Chairman of the Floral Committee, the Chairman of the Refreshment Committee, the Chairman of the Entertainment Committee, and heaven alone know what others seem all to be chasing about while a Whirling Dervish and when the gong sounds tomorrow night, all, I suppose, will be on the point of collapse, the squirrel's wheel has been going around and around so fast.. So closes the week and I am entranced at my own situation, what with the quiet that affords us this little chat and A. Scourby just waiting for somebody to give him the nod to start going on St. Michel and Chartres.....

6446

Sunday, December 13th, 1953.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your letter in Saturday's post, but how sorry I am to learn that you have had such a time with the cold. And how unfortunate that it should have had to flatten you out at such a season when the demands on your time must have been so pressing.

It would appear that both you and I through circumstances beyond our control are likely to assist the post office employees by cutting down the number of out-going packages before the holiday season, and if so, we shall at least have the satisfaction of knowing that although this was accomplished through no design on our part, the lightening of the burden for the carriers is the same.

The fact that you finally felt up to writing, convinces me that you really are definitely on the mend but I pray you to skip everything you can in the two weeks ahead in order to conserve your strength, and as every day is Christmas for me in the direction of little Miss Lee, let's skip all thought of packages until after the current excitement has died down and the health barometer has gone up.

And may I thank you for giving me so many interesting particulars about Frederika's opus. Yes, by all means, let us add it to the next list of Library of Congress suggestions. I, too, thought we should have had such a list in November, but none has come to hand as yet. Perhaps Washington got bogged down with the pursuit of old Santa or some such.

And may I thank you for telling me of your discovery of Dr. Miller's cabin and "gloomy" Yucca in the Dodd Mead publication. That certainly was a surprise. Somehow I had never thought of such an adjective as gloomy for Yucca and I am wondering if the picture appearing in the book carries out the impression of gloom suggested in the caption. Perhaps anything African suggests gloom to some people



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I have what I believe to be the only photograph ever made of Robert McAlpin's partner's home, --the Marco house which Eddy Suydam or may not have included in his Old Louisiana sketches. But from oldsters who could remember the McAlpin house, I gather that his residence was along lines of the Marco house and had nothing to do with Congo architecture, and, after all, there would have been no reason for such a man coming whence he came and living where he did, to have a residence in any way embracing Congo features.

Thirty hours have elapsed since I read your letter and I don't recall the full names of the two people who compiled this book, but if memory serves from yesterday, Schermer and partner were both ladies. This does not jibe with my memory of the two people who came here a long time back to take pictures for a literary pictorial things which, I assume, turned out to be this book. I recall quite distinctly that that pair passed as a lady and a gentleman, and when mention was made of Yucca, I mentioned the contemporary writers whom it had housed and assumed that if the ucca picture appeared, it would be in connection with the writing of Saxon, Brandford, Field or some such, little dreaming that its "gloom" would cover old Simon Legree. Lord, Lord what strange twists history takes between the hours of research and the moment of tumbling from the press.

On Friday night, while waiting for the news, I got bored by some Western Blood and Thunder piece, -- "Gund Smoke" or some such, so I instinctively gave the dial a twist, and was astonished to here some cracker drawl, announced: "This Is No.....el". Having just heard so much Hell a split second before, the Georgia drawl seemed to be speaking of Hell and definitely not Christmas, which just goes to show how slowly my mind can function.

I thoroughly enjoyed Saturday night for I wasn't very tired and a drizzle outside made everything seem doubly cozy within. Mr. and Mrs. Coombs had passed this way enroute to Alexandria, bring me a big box of brocoli and two two huge heads of cauliflower or howe one spells choufleur. In anticipation of a prolonged sitting with Henry Adams, I prepared some sprigs of the choufleur, raw, and some salted carckers and a gob of dressing, and as Mont St. Michel and Chartres unfolded, I found that both the text and the food cooperated neatly in staving off the sandman. Without knowing much about it, I have a feeling that there were many similarities between the characters of Henry Adams and "little Marcel" who probably may have known each other. I am impressed in the present opus by the parallel taste of Henry Adams as manifested by his obvious pleasure in rattling off the names of Cathedral towns o Europe, especially the Norman, just as little Marcel sated quite frankly that he enjoyed doing the same thing. And I find even Lestan likes enumerating things like Mersailles, Trianon, Marly, Bellevue St. Cloud, etc., etc.

6448

Monday, December 14th, 1953.

Memorandum:

It's cold. And as the sky is cloudless, there will probably be quite a heavy frost. Besides, the brisk, cold breeze blowing all day seemed to chill everything before sun up and it died down only with first dark.

But the freeshias an all the other children are safely tucked under warm covering and so I can luxuriate in the warmth of Yucca in full realization that the rest of the family is all snug.

I got a chance to read a little last night and almost seemed to share it, thinking as I did while the disks turned, how much another would have enjoyed sharing it.

I was in that section of Chartres, having to do with the buildin of the cathedral. Mr. Adams really sets forth some fascinating details. Until I had contemplated this section a little, I hadn't realized how many churches of Catholic persuasion across the world were dedicated to saints, such as Peter, Isaac, John and, shall I say, Martin. But what set me to thinking thus was the point Mr. Adams made in pointing out how in Ile de France in the eleven hundreds, there was a burst of determination in behalf of the Virgin, --Notre Dame de Paris, Notre Dame de Rheims, Notre Dame de Chartres and so on.

And according to Mr. Adams, Chartres was more exclusively devoted to the Virgin than any other and reached such a pitch that while the Father and the Son were permitted to appear, they definitely were playing second fiddle at best, and the whole business, --and the was a heap of it, was all concerned with the Virgin. And it seems that all this "notre Dame" enthusiasm began to get into the hair of the Holy Papa at Rome and from that day to this, I gather, Rome tends to frown or try to ignore whenever "Maryology" tends to get out of hand. And don't you love that word, "Maryology". I can see plainly enough that before long we shall be applying



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an "ology" to more people that we can shake a stick at. For instance, I know one or two "McCarthyologists" and one or two "Lizologists" but as for us, let's remain just plain "Eleanoreologists" regardless.

And before leaving such tomfoolery, I must remark that I giggled to myself last night when some news commentator, speaking of an appointment at the White House this week which the President is according the Governor of New York State, inadvertently got the first letter of each of the two words mixed up and blandly set forth none other than "Governor Gewey".

In pursuance of your reference to the time being ripe for another proposed list coming to hand from the Library of Congress, one came in today's post. It seems to be a little fatter than usual and is in a manila folder the size of this stationary. I shall try to find a like one in size in order to send it along shortly.

Oddly enough, it was only the Congressional letter that came to hand today. From two or three quarters I had looked for Parcel Post packages, --nothing of any importance, but the few things which I had counted on long since as pleasant to have to hand before time to wrap up a Christmas package. As yet, nothing of the sort has put in an appearance and so I have not been able to comply with the Post Office suggestion to mail early.

The ladies across the fence returned from their week end funeral party and both seem to be in the pink of condition. The flowers were numerous and beautiful and the people altogether charming. I didn't hear anything about the funeral and how the corpse fared, but I suppose that may well have been a matter of secondary importance. So often one associates grief and sorrow with funerals that the present expectation seems altogether novel. To be quite honest, I have no objection to such an attitude on anybody's part, but what puzzles me is why anybody goes to so much trouble to attend such a frolic if one isn't too much depressed by the loss of one's relatives. But I suppose it is the frolic, not the funeral, which makes the effort worth while, and if this be true, then the week end seems to have delighted everybody.....

6450

Tuesday, December 15th, 1953.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your lovely letter of Thursday noon at lunch time in today's post.

I gather your cold is indeed on the mend and I am holding the thought that all the hustle and bustle of these busy days don't induce its return. I follow the Manhattan weather picture with vast interest and I must say that some of the recent reports don't sound too helpful to those who like you have been suffering from such seasonal indispositions.

The incoming mail begins to increase in volume but as nothing I have ordered comes to hand, I do nothing to increase the burden of the parcel post department.

There was a flock of letters and cards today but as my entire afternoon was cluttered up with tiresome people, I never got around to confer with a secretary until long after supper when Y. C., hoping to round up two bits for show fare, passed this way and gave me a brief hand. A dozen letter wait to be added to the morrow's batch, although I suspect some of them are probably cards and that will make fast going. There was a package from "Lady of the Lake", being something in the nature of a key ring, I believe, and there seems to be a lovely jacket from Rudolph. I am sure I shall eventually get my bed cleared of all the trash now piled high on it but that will be some time later, after I have had an opportunity to sort out a few things and acknowledge this or that item, thereby insuring, I hope, no mix up of names and addresses.

I read a little last night from the Adams opus on a variety of points falling under the general heading of Fenestration. I don't recall ever using the word in English, but at the same time, I found myself wondering how it is that in French, German



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Latin and so on the word for window should be so similar and so utterly different in English. The Adams interpretation of the Chartres windows and their creation is bubbling over with erudition and delight, and the whole marked with dashes of vaguely caustic remarks concerning some of the clerical influences on church building in particular and in dogma in general. I find it quite entertaining to note the differing social groups of the 12th century who gave many of these windows, royalty, the nobility, the carpenters, the wool merchants, the furriers and so on. What with the vast organizations in the field of Labor Union today, I sometimes tend to forget about the old Guild systems of 8 or 9 hundred years ago when things were likewise pretty well wrapped up in one form or another.

And speaking of things relating to the Church, I must confess that I stuck my nose into Catholic matters today by penning a line to one of the big Church papers, recommending that some organization be established within the realm of mundane affairs pertaining to the Church -- a Committee of some kind, made up somewhat after the pattern of the Art Commission that looks into plans for construction and destruction of buildings in Washington, D. C. I pointed out that to my knowledge several Catholic Churches of some historical merit have been torn down, apparently with no thought of their artistic and historical value, by priests who, as but new comers to their particular parish, have given no thought to the havoc they have wrought, and suggesting that the Church put a curb on this wanton destruction by having some comp group give thought and approval to such plans in advance of any final decision on the part of the parish priest. This might slow up the demolitions a little but too often the gentlemen concerned are so much better, I hope, at theology than history that they give little thought and care less about such matters. At the moment, the Cathedral in Hatchitoches is balancing back and forth on a decision whether to tear it down or to repair it. And the presiding priest seems to have the say about such matters and he knows as much about historic values as a hog knows about a holiday. The lady doctor was called to administer to Celeste this morning before breakfast. As I understand it, Celeste was sick from exhaustion and from upset stomach. There was a party last night somewhere or other and apparently a tired stomach couldn't manage. Still the wheel of the squirrel's cage flies around and nobody, I am told, understands the squirrel. How thin runs Civilization's thread and how marvelous that it doesn't fritter away sooner than it does.....

6452

Wednesday, December 16th, 1953.

Memorandum:

How much you would enjoy the view from where I sit. I turned out my desk lamp so I could let my view rove around the White Garden, bathed in a silvery whiteness of the waning moon that is truly delicious. Last night and again tonight, the thermometer will touch a low exceeding anything we had in December, January or February of last year, and what with the humidity being low, the crispness of the air and the brilliance of the moon does really wonderful things to the whiteness of the sun dial and the dark green of the bamboo hedge beyond.

Celeste went to the hospital in town last night. I guess the lady doctor thought it would be better and much more convenient all around. I would collapse at the thought of a hospital, but Celeste seems to enjoy such doings and so I imagine she had a pleasant night of it and probably today was filled with no end of visits and gabfests. At supper J. H. remarked that she is back home again tonight. I shall probably see her on the morrow. Pat asked me if I wouldn't pass by that way with him tonight, but I demurred, naturally. I don't believe in starting such things and what with three other people there and perhaps a bevy of Reverend Fathers, there will be ample entertainment without anyone missing me.

At the post office this morning, the clerk handed me a registered package, remarking as he jotted down the insurance number, that it came from Dallas. It was a cylindrical tube, perhaps four and a half feet in length, and as it came from Dallas, I assumed the package to contain "what I have long wanted"; -- a letter to me.



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to mention the accompanying mud that is bound to stick to the shoes of endless droves of pilgrims, I cannot see using a hooked rug on the floor. In the first place, the thing is too nice for the floor and secondly, I cannot imagine anything in the carpet line ever contrived by man that was better designed to catch and hold mud than a hooked rug. And so I shall perhaps find a place for it on some wall, after the manner of the Gobelin of Cane River origin on the back gallery. What with Clemene's "baptisin" over the double doors at the West end of the gallery, perhaps the African House rug might balance it nicely on the East end, over the entrance to the Chapel, but I fear that would be a little heavy. But mentioning the Chapel suggests to my mind that eventually I might find it looked pretty immediately in front of the altar, for the subject, at least, would somehow harmonize with the coloring of "us-es little boy".

A card from the Kleisers comes to hand, having been cancelled in Orange, so they must have made it back to home base without dropping off here. Perhaps they will come just after Christmas, as they have done before. I must write Caroline and set her mind at rest. You will note the reference to Briarwood in the enclosed letter. As Briarwood uses open fires, it seems a little daring that Caroline should have gone off leaving Virginia locked in the house. Caroline, of all the people I ever knew, has less concept of what a half hour might be and I shouldn't be surprised if actually she had absented herself for half a day, --without ever sensing it.

I think I shall leave my desk lamp out and now have a go at Chartres by moonlight.....

6454

Thursday, December 18th, 1953.

Memorandum:

The weather remains cold and cloudless. The heat of the sun has been cut by a breeze off the ice cakes but ~~not~~ tonight the wind as cease and the moon as big and full of radiance as last night.

I got around to a bit of reading before my head started nodding and I vastly enjoyed Mr. Adams' account of the twelfth century woman whom he admired tremendously although he did remark that we shall never understand her any more than we shall comprehend the 20th century ones. His gaiety at certain places in his profundity is one element that makes the reading ripple along so readily, I guess.

This morning I saw the ladies at the coffee hour. They seemed as frisky as kittens and although I made some reference to yesterday's hospitalization, the touching on that subject seemed as out of line and some discussion of last summer's picnic or some such. I have always been impressed by the speed with which children can slump and perk up again.

Last night I got to the end of the memo before mentioning the Harness letter which I believe I enclosed. Isn't it interesting that Carl has taken up painting. It would be interesting to trace back the influences that set him to dipping into the paint pots. I shouldn't be surprised if Clemence, the President and further back, the Prime Minister, had all contributed to this impulse. Don't you think I ought to write him to ask for a sample of his handiwork. I certainly would like to get an impression of his mode of expression through such a medium.

Today's incoming mail was heavy with cards a little else, and as is usually the case, many of the cards come from people whose names I have never know, or, if having heard of them, have completely forgotten their identity. And then there are those which interest me not at all, since some people who cannot write, even to acknowledge a favor during the year, can some how squeeze out a card at Christmas, and so often these



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are those, to borrow and add to the Hall Mark greeting card slogan, those who "care enough to send the very best, --second class".

I am told that Emily Post says that sending Christmas cards second class is alright, and it probably is for her and I am sure I am quite indifferent as to which class people use when posting their own cards. For myself, however, who send no cards and I should find it difficult to send any greetings that had the postage cut in half. And that, I suppose, just goes to show how old fashioned am I.

A while back I read a book about Simon de Montfort and there were a few references in that volume, and not at all flattering, to Eleanor of Guyenne. Adams says she was unquestionably the greatest woman of the 12th or any other century. Unlike the author of the Montfort book, Adams admires her. I have never read a biography of her and I find it a great pity. H. Adams Esquire, didn't toss one off, for he seems to know lots about her. He mentions her power over her husband while Queen of France and the two daughters she bore him. He merely touches on her adventures in the Holy Land, her frolicsome ways with a handsome salve, her equally handsome uncle and even with Saladin. Then, back in France, he mentions the divorce which she apparently persuaded the King to get put through and her marriage to the King of England by whom she be-got 8 children, the second of whom was Richard, Coeur de Lion. And, as Gracie Allen was wont to say, "I'm pretty, too" and apparently, wonder of wonders, she had good sense to boot.

I liked one twist in the family tree when her two daughters, born when Queen of France, were married to two powerful nobles, -- the Comte de Champagne and the Comte de Chartres, while the sister of those two gentlemen, following the royal divorce, married the King, thereby becoming her own grandpa or some such.

I was glad to hear the re-broadcast last night of the Presidential press conference which, I believe, was said to have been the first ever put on the air. I should think it would be desirable to do this sort of thing frequently, for I must say it gives one a glimpse first hand that commentators, no matter how good, can possibly convey second hand.

I shall enclose a letter from the Library of Congress if I can find it. And so C B S had to re-write their contracts for Invitation to Learning.....

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Friday, December 18th, 1953.

Memorandum:

It's Christmas, and I'm loving it, thanks to the post from Lyme.

And if, by glancing at the date line of this memo, you think I'm a little bit ahead of time, you are perfectly right, --- in a way. But the truth is that with the arrival of your package, I simply couldn't resist undoing it, --it arrived in perfect condition, let me hasten to add, -- and my bed never looked so pretty all day long until secretary time, what with the beautifully wrapped packages scattered about in such rich profusion.

Helen was bubbling over with delight and surprise at the gayly wrapped package ear marked for her. She couldn't really believe it was for her and asked me to let her re-read the message on it. She was giggling with delight as she departed.

And no sooner was she out of sight than I departed, too, carrying with me the two exquisitely wrapped packages for the ladies across the fence. Celeste had not returned from town but Madam Regard was there. I didn't sit down. As she held them in her hands, gazing at them, she said that Miss Lee is such a lovely person and her packages so much more beautifully wrapped than the one she had mailed to her yesterday that she could only admire the packages from Lyme the more.

Little Miss Clemence's gift is still sitting on my bed and will make its way to her on the morrow. So are my cigarettes sitting there, too, with a prospect of opening them later tonight when I really settle down to letting the 12th century take care of itself or one evening while I devote myself to the 17th century exclusively.

I hadn't opened the large flat packages until after the secretary had departed and accordingly had all the plaisir of "Plaisir de France" to myself. I have been entranced by many things explored by lamp light and my enchantment will be doubled on the morning when by daylight the coloring stands forth even more brilliantly. The wonderful thing about this magazine has always



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been that its ideas are so delicious and often so original that one feels as though he had just made an excursion into a dozen nebular concepts on turning through it, --either in the advertising section or those devoted to articles and art. I am truly delighted to have it.

And the sumptuous wrapping papers of Plaisir de France and of the record continue to grace my downy couch, giving it such a festive air. But the record itself is resting slap on the reading machine. Frankly, I was quite unprepared for the sound that struck my ears at first, for, although I don't know why, I had assumed it was some musical recording. But when the first words reached me, my surprise was instantly swept away by my delight for it chanced that I had begun on the side that starts off with *La Cigale et le Fourmi*, followed by *Le Corbeau et le Renard*, --old, old favorites which I had not heard in Lo! these many years, and it transported me to forgotten "lands beyond the sea" as mentioned in the lines I think I once quoted from the verses set to the music of von Beethoven *Minuette in G*.

And quite aside from the excellent voice that records these old time favorites, there is something unique about the record itself, for it is the first one in all the reading machine disks I have gone through that in no way carries any sound save that of the recording voice. Usually, you may recall, when any record is touched by the needle, there is a slight sound that seems an inevitable consequence of the needle in contact with the disk. But in this record, and for the first time, there is no sound whatsoever either at the beginning of the record or in the spaces between the ending of one Fable and the beginning of the next.

And so tonight, instead of Henry Adams, it's going to be an all Jean de la Fontaine program, and in the days ahead, Jean de la Fontaine is going to find a place readily to hand, along side the Carmen Caballero rendition of the Strauss Waltzes, which ever so often between jumps, will find a place on the revolving disk to bring delight and relaxation to my soul as it is projected as association with the donor and thereby making everything coming from the machine have an increase in value of more than a thousand fold.

And so it's Christmas, and I even borrowed some of the shredded paper from your package to fill out the corners of a box I packed tonight and will head on its way in the same mail taking this letter. Bless your heart for making me so happy.....

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Sunday, December 20th, 1953.

Memorandum:

And even as was Friday night, so was Saturday all over again and more, for not only did I have an opportunity to examine Plaisir de France under most favorable circumstances, but also I had an opportunity to go into my favorite impressionist with *Friday* night, as a sort of imposition of fortitude, I forced myself to save the last and largest folio for Saturday night, and so, between Fables, and much decorating, I could explore the handiwork of that somewhat forlorn little man to whom life seemed to hold out such meager joys but who, in turn, was able to create canvases that so many people after him would love and cherish for their simplicity and charm.

But Rousseau never seemed quite so precious to me as I held in one hand your lovely, lovely card, done in a manner so exquisite and to my inner joy, and the sheer contrast of wisdom and the ultimate in artistry of a more subtle refinement, contrasting sharply with the utter child-like pleasure of Rousseau made a combination that delights my Christmas season no end.

I was so interested in what you had to say about the Arab and about the nude lady on the couch in full jungle. They are so gay in themselves that I suppose one runs across reproductions more readily, which is good, but for that very reason, the ones in the present sumptuous folio, being less frequently run across, seem to make them more precious and I have no doubt that living with them as I shall daily do in the weeks ahead, I shall probably cherish the others the more because the masterpieces of any artist have a way of growing on one when one becomes better and better acquainted with all his works, and particularly those more seldom seen.

And today Pat asked me to run over to Montrose with him in his little British car. The thing is so small, --on the Citroen type, that the bare pecane trees against the sky seemed ever so more brave and barren and instinctively I realized that living last night with Rousseau's leafless trees, the Montrose pecane limbs seemed more precious and lovelier to the heart than ever before.

And in between times last night, I had lots of fun clearing the decks for Christmas. I, of course, had saved the two sets of carillon



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from last year, and these I suspended from the L and the S of the andirons in the living room fireplace, banked by a huge bouquet of glistening branches of grandifloras, --a big armful which I had gathered a couple of months back when the burrs or cones or whatever were at their heaviest with red seeds, even more abundant than those depicted by Audubon in one of the early plates of his Birds series.

And I had saved my candles from last year, too, and what with their gay pine cones prettily adjusted, the living room took on a really festive atmosphere. It was so pleasant, with only the candles lighted and Jean de la Fontaine's characters speaking in the shadows which, it seems to me, is as pleasant a way to hear them as I have ever known.

Naturally my thoughts turned in the direction of Lyme and whenever that occurs, I never feel alone.

Fortunately a cloud coverage and an occasional drizzle on Saturday kept down intruders and the same obtained today. This gave me an opportunity to round up a lot of odds and ends and to knock off a stack of letters which didn't put me even with the incoming cards but which helped a lot in moving in the right direction.

Celeste had a letter from Juanita saying that the Joe Henrys would not come to Melrose for Christmas and today at dinner, J. H. casually remarked that he had just talked with Joe on the 'phone and that they would be here for Christmas. Now that is where the matter stands, but I am holding the thought that they will come, for the bigger the crowd when the Shreveport contingent moves in, the better.

And you will get a laugh out of this. After all the excitement about me getting "something you have always wanted", it finally arrived. I sometimes wonder if people unknowingly set forth aspirations that certainly aren't their own and so give false impressions or if other people because of some mental twist, cook up desires which they attribute to others with no apparent basis for so doing. Be that as it may, I cannot ever remember thinking about the virtues of what actually came to hand, and while it is no doubt a convenience for some people, it never occurred to me to have the slightest desire to possess such a thing. --an electric clock. Isn't that a scream. A card that surprised me the most came from Kansas City. A note or two to Marybeth Davis had been returned, and I thought she had probably died in the Spring floods, when Lo! came a card, --and no address on the envelope. She is a kind person and it's nice to know she still in the land of the living. Such a nice

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Monday, December <sup>21</sup>~~22~~nd, 1953.

Memorandum:

Curious stationery, yes, no.....well, the store is closed and I can't seem to set hand to any ample supply of the ordinary fool's cap, and so I might place a dunce cap on my brow for not having thought about such matter before this late hour. I shall try to remember to leave adequate margins at top and bottom, however, so the printing may be detached, if that seems advisable.

Safely tucked away in my armoire are a stack of letters, including one from little Miss Lee, one from Dora, one from La Storm, etc., etc., not to mention what appears to be a flock of cards.

Second and third rate secretaries passed this way prior to the hour Helen was expected and I let them sail along, but at supper time Juanita told me that she thought Helen was helping her grandmother move from some place on Little River to another place on Little River, at the bridge, the setting that somehow always reminded me of Messrs Currier and Ives, as Mr. Belle would style it.

I am enjoying this evening's unusual warmth and all windows and doors are ajar. I suppose I am trying to make the most of it because the Weather Bureau says that a cold wave rolling Southward from the Rockies has already taken over Oklahoma where it is now 20 degrees above, and the same unwanted thermometer readings will be ours late tomorrow afternoon. I am hoping an unexpected breeze may spring up from the Gulf and knock the cold front back to Wyoming or where ever.

Things were in a mild hubbub across the fence this morning at the coffee hour. Madam Regard is up and doing again but she was getting whisked around over non-essentials such as which chair she should not sit in and so on. I have charted so many storms in the past that I was not at all surprised to get my shoulder dampened, and not with coffee, before leaving. Although the husband, I was assured, would never look at any one else, still he is altogether too much indifferent to her interests, not sufficiently concerned over the question of out-going Christmas cards and so on and so forth. It is true that he seems interested that she will see Europe as she really wants to this summer but that is not the thing. --it's the Christmas



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Monday, December 22nd, 1953

cards about which he lacks enthusiasm. I got that patched up which is another way of saying that I provided an adequate audience for the performance of the mistreated wife and probably that mood held at least until noon, or perhaps a little after noon when Frances Henry could provide another listener, for Frances was expected to stop off here on her way to Baton Rouge where she will spend the night and thence on to New Orleans where she will board a boat for a quick holiday cruise to Panama, being back in time for the opening of college on or about January 4th. Why anybody wants to take such a trip, heading out for no where to see nothing, I cannot imagine but she will have had a sea voyage and will probably come back having seen and absorbed just exactly as much as will the other lady doing a round in Europe next summer.

At dinner today, we dined on venison, somebody having shot a deer somewhere in the Montrose hills. I suppose it is the most difficult meat in the world to roast but Juanita did a good job of it. But don't ask me why anybody should want to shoot a deer, for I wouldn't have the vaguest notion. I am glad they are becoming more numerous in these parts. Some of them are protected in the Kisatchie National Forest which adjoins Montrose plantation, I believe. I still marvel that in 1776 36,000 deer skins were exported from this area, as the official records for that year indicate. It is difficult to imagine such a wealth of wild game in this region alone.

I was talking with the college library today and learned that all members of the Library Association have just received a letter, outlining the determination of the Association to maintain their opposition to book burning and asking each member to contribute \$14.00 to carry on the work. In view of other organizations devoting themselves to such ends, and asking their members to contribute \$3.00 each, this \$14.00 each for every member of the Library Association appears a bit steep.

ut I must remember the wider margins at top and bottom tonight and break off forthwith. Besides, Jean de la Fontaine is just at my elbow, waiting for me to give him a spin, and I am in such a mood to accommodate that gentleman. I smiled to myself last night when, through chance, I stumbled on some historical play which noted the Revolutionary doings of one Mr. Lee of----of all place,--Lyme.....

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Tuesday, December 22nd, 1953.

Memorandum:

As you may have noticed, I finally tracked down the elusive stationery. And the reason I couldn't find it was because it was slap beside me on the tabouret holding my reading machine, with my knee almost touching it as I pecked away at the Royal.

And may I thank you for your Monday-Tuesday letter which, under ordinary circumstances would have reached me on Saturday, but the seasonal drag must have held it back for a day, Sunday, which meant tow, for a Monday delivery, and then until Tuesday for a secretary dragging the "footsies".

Tonight, the grapevine tells me, she arrived while I was at supper and she didn't wait, which was good sense, because it is cold. But Y. C. passed this way when his mama told him I needed aid and he helped along as best he could but, oddly enough, he seems to be forgetting how to read, which reminds me that often people in these remote parts who sometimes are out of sight of a clock for some months, tend to forget how to tell time. Lucky people.

Naturally I read but your letter and shall hold the balance of the mail until tomorrow. It is growing rather heavy and I shall have to keep on my "thinking cap" when I finally get around to examining it in bulk. Yesterday's post contained 37 envelopes, half a dozen of which were probably letters, the balance probably cards. Today's batch numbered 46 and these two patches, added to Wednesday's crop, ought to provide quite a sitting. ut as I have to catch no train, I can let most of them pile up for a few days without missing much, I imagine.

I rounded up a pretty good assistant this morning at 11, but before he had finished the first date line, a tap came at the door. It was Mary Pringle and some matron who was pleasant but dumb.

With dinner at 11:30, there wasn't so much time to do anything by way of discussing business until afterward, although I did get time to examine an extraordinary contraption which Mary had



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made for me. She is a nice person but her taste is so novel that I wish she would stick to the porcelain things I have recommended to her attention. I must describe it to you, although words will convey very little. In size, it might be compared with your lovely Wedgewood cake box. But the thing is five sided instead of being round. It has a top and a bottom, and the whole thing is made of cellophane or some such business, with each of the five panels having a photograph of some Melrose scene, perhaps 6 by 8 inch showing through the cellophane. These five sides are laced together with red cord, and the five sided top has the same type of lacing all around. In the middle of the cover is a rather larger picture of me standing in front of the big house. A red tassel of the same material as the lacing enables one to lift the lid easily. Turn the thing upside down and there is a picture of the old store. But handle the thing gingerly because the whole thing starts to collapse if you look at it, --or even if you don't. Mary explained that it was to hold the in-coming letters. One week's operation of the thing and it would be in tatters. It's all so Gay '90 and terrible and it emerges as almost a prize in the field of curiosities. And it's one of those darned things that you feel bound to preserve and yet you haven't the slightest notion as to where to put it out of sight and how you can remember to avoid squashing it.

And speaking of Christmas in general, I was impressed by the fact that your package apparently got a little ahead of the slowdown in traffic, and I hope you don't mind that I delivered the packages across the fence promptly instead of holding them until closer to Friday. The ladies are very scrupulous about not opening their presents until Christmas morning and I notice several gifts in the living room, gracing the mantle, and slal in the middle are the two from little Miss Lee, and I must say that they are more beautifully wrapped than all the others further along the same prominent resting place.

My reading machine went out of whack again yesterday. I shall say nothing about it until after the big rush is over. But I shall miss it. I can't recall if I mentioned yesterday that the Talking Books Topics arrived, --the recorded edition, and to my delight I found A. Scourby has read Dostievski's *The Idiot*. I have never read the novel, --it was done about 1868, if I remember correctly, but if it is anything like the Brothers Karamazov, I shall admire the handiwork of the artist who is always splendid, even when writing about things that are pretty gruesome and, in less adroit hands, not at all interesting. Lord, Lord, here we are at the end of our chat, and not yet started. Well, there's tomorrow.

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Wednesday, December 23rd, 1953.

Memorandum:

Your elegant letter, your equally elegant card, both came to hand, being under the same cover, in today's post. Friday was the date in memory serves, and I wonder how you found time amidst all the hurly-burly, and the inevitable hurly-burly just ahead. I can but marvel at how you keep your head and strength in such commotion. I pray you not to think of writing until January has come and all the excitement has subsided a little, even though there be scant hope of imagining a date when a semblance of solitude will return.

I suppose maturity inevitably looks askance at youth, and I must say I find the episode which you recited concerning the doings around Rhode Island, Washington and the Lord knows where all just too stupid for words. It is heartening to know that at least some of the institutions are stamping that sort of stuff out. But I had better not get high blood pressure over such doings, but I feel like batting anybody who furthers such ridiculous antics.

I wanted to thank you for telling me about the title of Anne's new novel. It will probably stand as one of her books, whether popular or not, that was created under as much strain as is supposed to have gone into so many books in the better brackets.

It is good news that you are having Thursday off. I hope circumstances will permit you to concentrate a little on domestic chores and thus avoid some of the terrific strain of Friday. But I have no doubt there will be the usual last minute things to be looked after in the big road and then, of course, one can plan such times as one pleases, but somehow a million other people can up-set the apple cart so easily without even trying.

A day of chill and synthetic sunshine obtained, with the thermometer never getting above 42 and the ice in St. Giggin's never thawing. It will be 10 degrees colder tonight and .... the Weather bureau was very careful to avoid the word snow but



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promised "percipitation". I wish a spanking breeze would spring up from the Gulf and blow the cold front to smithereens. Oddly enough the cold seems to be coming not from the North but from the East, and the South East, --which seems odd enough, except that Florida is said to be freezing. And speaking of the latter place reminds me that I heard a conversation today which impressed me as being so true for the speaker. There was talk about the impending R. E. A. pow-wow in Miami, --early in January sometimes and mention was made that every ody would skip over to Havana for a quick-look-see, but when it appeared that the jaunt there would cover mostly the daylight hours, there was much pouting for "everybody knows that the only point in going to avana is to go to the night-spots". Imagine.

Dr. Rand passed by to see me late this afternoon. He seemed fine. He said everybody, including in-laws, were going to spend Christmas Day with Frances Rand Jack in Shreveport and that they planned to pass this way going up. That sounds like a rather large concourse, perhaps 15 or 20 people if all the Alexandrians of the family really do go and I shud er to think of the commotion around here but I always believe in large numbers if Shreveport comes down here on that day.

Dr. Combs had to go to Alexandria today and so he stopped off here and picked up my reading machine, taking it with him, and as he was back in Hatchitoches by noon, the repair shop fixed the thing and tomorrow he will bring it down, so I shall not be without it over the week end, and I am turly grateful for that. Helen came today and we did one or two letters, but as Dr. Rand arrived in the midst of it, I let everything go, and was happy I had read your letter and your lovely card first off the bat.

If and when I get caught up on the first class stuff, I so much want someone to run through the current issue of Life, and particularly the article about the Cathedrals. I, of course, recognized San Marco's. It seems to me my tour with Henry Adams from Mont San Michell to Chartres ought to put me in a perfect mood for getting a maximum out of the Life article.

Between jumps today I took time out to turn through Plaisir de France again. I am finding so much pleasure and so many new concepts, just in turning through it. It's such a pleasant Christmas with Theodore and Plaisir and all.....

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Thursday, December 24th, 1953.

Memorandum:

There's much racket outside, what with fire crackers off in the direction of the honkey-tonk exploding frequently. Some of them must be of considerable intensity as I can feel the vibration of the floor.

The sky is cloudless, the heavens dotted with a billion stars and as the moon will not rise until much later, the setting should be perfect for an astral display, whether it might be of major planets in conjunction or a real Christmas star as described by so many covering this day one thousand nine hundred and fifty-three years ago. I'm glad nobody mentioned fire crackers on that occasion and I cannot harmonize the voices of the herald angels and the bang of the fire crackers..

The thermometer stood at 18 this morning and although the sun shone brilliantly all day, the mercury never got up above 42 and tonight it will be cold again. Somehod had the happy idea of turning off the water system last night, unbeknown to me and so, after stepping into my tub about 10 o'clock, I stepped right out again, getting damp not at all. And early this morning it appeared the water was frozen in the pipes regardless, since the same person who turned the circuit off last night supposedly turned it on again this morning. Along about noon, I got bored with the whole business and besides, I wanted to ake off my ang beard and so I did some fiddling with the half dozen gages and Lo! there was an abundance. Tonight the syst m will not be cut off so at least on the morrow if there isn't any moisture, there will be a good reason.

I got quite a lot of mail covered this morning, and that was well since the entire afternoon was taken up with people. Among others passing this way was Mrs. Combs who delivered the reading machine. I am so glad to have this to hand in case I find an opportunity to make use of it over the week end, as I think, perhaps, I may.

Pat got off for Texas right after dinner. The clerk's wife



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came down to Melrose with presents and she and her husband returned to town around 4, so J. H. and I supped together alone.

The clerk will not be here tomorrow and so I shall hold this memo and mail it with Friday's on Saturday morning

Dr. Joel Fletcher telephoned me from Lafayette about 2 p.m. He was merely conveying greetings and inviting me to come down for a few days if I cared to at any time but thinking I might like to make it during this holiday season. I thought it very kind of him but, of course, you know the answer.

You will enjoy reading the somewhat lengthy letter from La Storm, for it seems to contain lots of particulars about various Hollywood sub and the reference to C. B. Luce and her latest wrinkle is always arrest La Storm had communicated with the 74th Street specialist and passed along the correspondence to me. What interested me particularly was the line in the physician's letter that a stamped envelope should be enclosed by people wishing to hear from him, and I notice the envelope to La Storm which I am returning to her, bore stamps that had been affixed by the Hollywood Post Office and which had to be paid for by the recipient. I take it the good doctor must have a slight mania on the matter of postage, and such in-consequentialities are always interesting and the more so in the eminent, it seems to me. I hope I can find K.'s letter to send along with La Storm's, the two contrast so strikingly so far as facility in the use of a pen is concerned. It seems to me so evident that the elder lady isn't liking California as much as Carolina and presume the young one likes it because her family is in the neighborhood.

I listened with interest to the Vice President's report on his globe encircling tour. I thought it sounded just like him and the false impression he created about the previous Administration causing the Korean business was typical of his poverty speech during the election and just as mis-leading. There were some differences, however, in that Poverty gave way to Kings and Emperor and his wife who in the election he referred to as Pat although Elmer Davis pointed out that it was Thelma, became in last night's speech none other than Mrs. Dixon. Different times, different tunes. Let's all pray the Lord that the Vice President never loses his Vice.

And now I want to turn through Plaisir de France for a little and then have a round with the Fables, and so to bed.....

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Friday, being Christmas, 1953.

Memorandum:

It was the happiest Christmas I can remember on Melrose.

The Wenks came late, --around 11:30, were on their good behavior which I didn't know they possessed, and they left early, around 2:30. I assume the good behavior was instituted and maintained under force of self control, another attribute I didn't know they possessed. Which way the wind is blowing, however, in my own case, may or may not be guessed by the fact that in former Christmases I have received electric blankets, radiolas and the Lord know what all, and today I received a handkerchief of somewhat indifferent quality. I like it better that way.

Colored friends were tapping on my door before sun-up, even before I was out of bed, and I like it that way, too. And there came some whom I see frequently and some whom I see but once a year, and it was all merry.

Celeste had asked me to drop by her house for a drink at 11 and as I reached her doorstep, the lady doctor and husband reached the same spot at the same time bringing me a gift on their own account and what I imagine is a shirt from the C. Vernon Cloutiers. I say on the love seat with the lady doctor, --the Joe Henrys and Juanita's mother had already arrived, and it was pleasant to talk with the lady doctor in spite of the hubbub which developed shortly when the Wenks blew in.

The Wenks brought J. H. and English bull dog which is supposed to become a companion to the Boxer which is already a member of the household and Celeste said they were half mine on the strength that when she goes to Europe, I shall be Master of the Hounds. Why limit it to Europe, but there's no need bringing up that.

Celeste had sent me a gift earlier in the morning and between callers I examined it, - a box containing toilet water and



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an earthen bottle containing what I assumed might be talcum powder. I fiddle with the stopper at the top and was nearly flattened out when the gaget worked, squirting liquid soap slap in my eyes.

It was good luck that I had an extra shirt handy, for as I was trying to regain my sight, somebody else was knocking and the garment I had on was a mess as a result of the trick the gaget had played on me.

The costume of this and that youth passing this way delighted me as invariably such things do on Christmas Day. There was quite a variety of powder blues and oyster gray suits, --summer things which were probably palmed off by town merchants on country people the day before Christmas. With the thermometer at 28, this summery effect was really impressive and although a delight to the eye, --it all contrasted so nicely in coloring with their dark skins, still it didn't seem to push up the thermometer any. I was delighted when Clyde Anthony appeared in his same costume as last year, --a tuxedo complete with white shirt, black bow tie, black pattern leather dancing slippers and all, and at 7 o'clock in the morning, and just starting off the day from the remotest fastnesses of Little River, the effect is wonderful. I suppose an element is added by the fact that his skin is black and the white of his eyes are rather noticeable so that at first glance, one has no idea where clothing leaves off and body begins.

It goes without saying I didn't get an opportunity to do any reading from the Four Cathedrals article in Life but later tonight I shall read some more from "hartres and Mont St. Michel which will make tomorrow's exploration of the Life article that more interesting.

Tonight the sky is as star-bangled as last night. It was pleasant to sit for a little while, well wrapped up, on the gallery, with only the candles of the Blessed Martin to vie with the great constellations. I reckon I need not enumerate a flock of thoughts running through my mind. I reckon I need not elaborate on the direction in which my thoughts wandered and how I wished that you, too, after all the days excitement, might be having a little minute to yourself, - alone. I marvel at the terror that word seems to hold for most people, --alone, --for somehow it is then that I feel nearest to those who, regardless of mere geography, are forever close beside me. That is how it is in the quiet of tonight and I treasure it more than any hour of the day.....

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Sunday, December 27th, 1953.

Memorandum:

I was slightly taken aback this morning when the New York broadcast of news by Columbia announced, as is the custom, the date, the voice stating:

"This is Sunday, December 17th, 1953".

The error was not corrected and I don't see why it should be, for if anyone listening, --let alone the announcer, hadn't realized that Christmas of 1953 had already been achieved, then whatever date was given couldn't matter much.

Requests came in early for pilgrimages on the part of people journeying from Oklahoma, Texas and so on toatchitoches this past week end to see the lights. I granted three requests for the morning which turned out to be too many, since unannounced friends found Sunday morning a good time to pay visits, too.

While in little Miss Alberta's house with one group, a servant appeared to say there were people to see me. It turned out to be the Chalkleys of Lake Charles, making their annual Christmas round. I asked them to wait for me at Yucca and so divested myself of the pilgrims at hand, only to find that other pilgrims had greeted the Chalkleys at Yucca, --people unknown to me, and I was glad the halkey invited them in.

I have known the Chalkleys for years and the lady has always had her right hand bandaged. Today she asked me if I didn't think somebody in the Natchitoches country could cure her. I told her I had not the slightest doubt and that as I had several voodoo practioners as friends I should be delighted to put her under their care.

I asked about their jaunt to Hong-Kong and she said it was an idea resulting from a conversation she had had with Mrs. Eisenhower, and although there seems to be no point in adding this fact, still there is some element pertaining thereto, to wit: Harry Chalkley is said to own a million acres of tide land oil.



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But aside from having millions, arry also has had kidneys that have been mis-behaving, and so the 6 weeks tour to China was beneficial for the rest it imposed. But ong-Kong was so delightful that they needed six weeks more, returing, to get caught up on rest.

They had a charming English girl with them who is returning home in a couple of weeks. They confessed last night, --and I had heard something about it from a customer of the same store in town where they were shopping, that what to do with the Cane River series by way of shipment, --either by air as the girl will travel or by regular post, for it seems she wanted to take them with her, having purchased a set in town. How they settled it, I don't know.

Harry said if I would come down for a few days with them at Lake Charles, he would send to fetch me and to bring me back. You know the answer to that.

They said that architect, Partridge, having adopted two children and taken on his father-in-law to live with the Partridges, their duplicate of Yucca in Lake Charles was growing too small and that they contemplated building a bigger and better one which is certainly interesting. They had heard somebody from Dallas had contacted Joe Partridge to build Yucca house in Dallas. I didn't ask, but I assumed this was probably the lady who wrote me on the subject some time back when I referred her to the architect who ought to know most about the matter.

Yesterday was a hurly-burly, - lots of people by appointment in the morning, including the Woods who bought me a gift package and I handed them one on their way out. I had received from somebody a couple of bottles of Sherry which I tucked into a awkward package, and was entanced to discover, after the departure of the Woods, that they had brought me Sherry. The John Kyser came in the afternoon with people from Washington, --Defense Department. They were pleasant but what with one thing and another, I was too sleepy to read much last night, although I did approach the end of the Adams opus, that section being less concerned with Cathedrals in stone than in thought, with emphasis on Heloise and Abelard, St. Francis of Assissi, Thomas Aquinas and the Lord knows what others.

About 10:30 or 11 this morning when ucca was full of people, the telephone rang. I didn't answer it, --fortunately. Someone asked if I didn't intend to and I said I did not, what with all the conversation of a pleasant nature then in progress. At dinner, Celeste asked me if I had received a telephone from Alexandria. I said I had not. She wondered whom it might be since it seemed to be a girl's voice and had first asked for J. H. and then for me. I feigned utter ignorance and she expressed the thought if it had been the Rands, they would have talked with her. So much for Sunday and now for a dab of La Fontaine and bed.....

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Monday, December 28th, 1953.

Memorandum:

I'm only about 70 envelopes behind at present writing, and only ten packages unopened, which seems to be promising enough since by the turn of the year, if there aren't too many frolics on the docket, I ought to be up to date.

Lots of envelopes bear names and addresses of people of whom I have never heard and accordingly I can keep them straight only by limiting myself to a couple a dozen at a sitting when and if secretaries show up. ut I'll get around to the last one by the end of the week I am sure.

I expect there's no need for me stressing the fact that, frolic as they will and do, the Ethiopians will have to get to moving faster if they ever chalk up any records comparable to the white folks, for parties seem to be "busting out" all over the place, as from Grand Ecote to Magnolia and right at this moment there's an egg nog in progress for the river gentry across the fence. Every day of late I have been reminded of the impending festivities and a few minutes ago my telephone rang, reminding me that things were getting under way. Perhaps the lady will make faces on the morrow but that will be alright. I'm not dreaming of going.

Since I don't go to parties to begin with and never go to any across the fence, it's odd that I continue to get such persistent invitations. And even if the crowd were interesting, --and it wont be, - I still wouldn't go on other grounds. For to my way of thinking a successful egg nog party stands on two legs that are requisite: first, the right crowd, and second, an egg nog that isn't Merry Widow candy or whatever you call that stuff that is whipped up to look like cotton, for I prefer egg nogs that may be drunk and not some synthetic desert (perhapsh with another s) which tastes like anything but a good drink. The readers of Harper's Bazaar set high store on something that looks and tastes like white of eggs that have been whipped up mightily, sugared, and impregnated with a drop or two of liquor. I suppose that is the proper way to serve the stuff, - froth eaten with a spoon but it in no way coincides with my idea of an egg nog. Besides, I like chocolate milk better.



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Today there was a meeting of cotton planters from this section of Louisiana, which, as you know is the heart of the cotton producing area in the State. Alexandria was the point on which they converged and at supper, J. H. was full of particulars regarding the doings. It was called to examine the Agriculture Department's ruling about cutting down acreage for cotton and it appears to have been accomplished in such a way that many of the planters will have to get rid of a large percentage, in some cases half, of their tenants. George Long, Huey's and Earle's brother, is Representative from this District. J. H. said it was a sight the way he was milling around among the planters, throwing out his arms in desperation and endlessly crying:

"I'll do anything you want. I'll do anything you want....Just tell me."

Huey approached the genius stage as a politician. --he would have told the planters what they wanted and made signs at doing something. Earle is a clever politician and would have persuaded the people what they wanted, whether it was possible to accomplish or not, but George is definitely on the dumb side, eased into office by the name of Long and will probably always hold the job without much notion as to what it is all about. It was he whose main campaign plank was that he would introduce a bill into Congress that would enable the Government to dig a canal for ocean shipping from the Gulf to Alexandria, --but to what point not even he seemed certain.

J. H. says that the way the law is rigged, nothing can be done about the quota as it is currently imposed by the Agriculture Department, and naturally one can but snicker in one's sleeve as one thinks how many of these big operators were all out for a change in Washington a year back.

It rained last night, --a heavy sprinkle most of the time and a lighter one most all day. But that didn't discourage pilgrims of whom there were several, including a man, wife and daughter from Little Rock, friends of the William Hughes family. They are making a round through Louisiana in the interest of their daughter who is studying Anthropology and while the mother and father did the tour and sat in the living room, talking family portraits, racial strains and so on, the daughter contented herself with the cats, finding them much more to her liking than such a tiresome place and subject as Melrose. Perhaps she was busy contriving Grandpa's family tree which out to be wonderfully interesting in alley cat branches.

And now I must roll up my sleeves and knock out some mail. If you would jot down the address on the enclose, keeping same for reference, I should be glad.....

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Tuesday, December 29th, 1953.

Memorandum:

Much too busy to get anything done.....that has characterized my whole day and, as usual under such circumstances, I am altogether resentful at circumstances which is just as full of sense as beating one's head against a stone wall.

But the number of tiresome pilgrims got into my hair, although there was recompense in one gentleman and lady from Pittsburg, Kansas where ever that may be.

It seems that they were traveling in the general direction of Kansas, as from New Orleans, and had reached Natchitoches when someone mentioned the African House and so they turned about and came down the river road. They were perfectly entranced with what aw them, for they have recently been doing something or other in the Belgian Congo and somehow their pause at this bend of the river w just like being transported back to the field of their recent endeavors.

I never ask pilgrims what their business might be for, first off it's none of mine and secondly, people really interested in this place don't come to go into details about some other line of endeavor having nothing to do with Melrose, and, generally speaking, I'm not at all interested in what anybody is up to. After all, 99 per cent of the people in the world aren't doing what they want to do and I can't see as it should make the slightest difference to me what tread mill they chance to have been pushed into.

They spoke of the charm of the real Africans in the Belgian Congo and they mentioned the great amount of mining being done there, --copper, uranium and so on. They also spoke of the vast palm plantations there, owned and operated by Lieber Brother Proctor and Gamble and so on.

They would have tarried a little longer by La Mabry appeared quite unannounced, bringing two or three people with her. This was the first time I had seen her since last May which was soon enough, she goes into such endless details about her



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trips, touching on every detail except anything that would be of the slightest interest. She is a kind person, but I was too tired to bother much with her today.

And isn't it wonderful how dumb I can be by jockeying myself into the greatest possible boring manner by simply complaining about others radiating the same stuff.

Eventually I am going to find an opportunity to get into the somewhat formidable stack of mail which daily increases in volume. Helen sent me word today that she had hoped to come to lend me a hand as she was not going to work for Mr. Carter at his drive-in down Cloutierville way but the reason she wasn't working was because she was having a toothache and therefore couldn't get over to Yucca. I am impressed by this form of reason and in view of the somewhat sketchy assistance from other secretaries, I fish about in the letters, trying to discover which, if any, might be important that would be manageable by the force at hand. I know not if anything has come through from little Miss Ramsey who must be in Marshall by now. I shall drop her a line tonight, pointing out that as the Henrys are scheduled to run down to Miami for a few days beginning next 7th or 8th of January, she might pass by here a few days later to take up a few things at a time when making visits next door will not be the order of the day.

"Names on the Land" by Stewart is a fat book coming to hand which I expect to dip into from time to time in the weeks ahead, probably sandwiched in between "The Idiot" and "Chartres" and such like which I shall also re-read in certain sections. I believe the "Names" volume is a Random House or some such and ought to contain a lot of interesting particulars about civic and geographical names across the country. I only read the introduction and went to sleep before I had finished the first page. I was probably sleepy to start with and the reader is William Lazare whose voice isn't too inspiring toward wakefulness. In the first page mention was made of the number of rivers bearing the same name although the words might be in different languages, as Red Red River, Riviere Rouge and Colorado River. I was awake then at that point because I had never thought of the Colorado River as being Red River and I had never heard of the local Red River as being called Riviere Rouge. Perhaps this is an example of a couple of languages getting words transposed with the adjective of the one language being employed to modify a noun which had been confused with a somewhat similar word from another language. Bt, Lord, what a dry note to end out chat with, and yet we have surprisingly for me arrived

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Wednesday, December December 30th, 1951

Memorandum:

We were scheduled to get a cold snap today but the wave broke in a south-easterly direction and so we shall escape.

It was so sunny and warm it seemed a good time to give the Arenbourg "children" some cotton hulls which have started decomposing nicely and I got the impression they were enchanted to receive the extra hand-out early this morning.

Somehow I tucked in half a dozen Oklahomans before dinner and found time to do some other gardening before the tap of the dinner bell.

I am asking J. H. to get a new dinner bell as the one which has been used for so long cracked just after the Madam's death, and so doesn't make much volume of sound any more. At the same time, I am attaching a slip of paper to the old bell and giving it to J. H., asking him to have the following inscription engraved on it:

"I belong to

Melrose Plantation

where I served as a waiter for many years.

Cammie G. Henry  
from 1898 to 1948."

Then I shall place it in some appropriate situation. Don't you think so. I hope J. H. will think so, too.

Clemence came to see me today, looking as pert as a parrot, dressed in tight fitting overalls. She was picking up pecaness and stopped for a "little Howdy" and a glass of wine. She seems to be getting younger by the moment.

I telephoned Carmen Breazeale at the Chamber of Commerce it is



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morning, recommending that each day she write envelopes carrying names of people who drop by to see her when their identity is fresh in her mind and when their interest is obviously something that will last. Keeping these envelopes on file, I recommended that the Chamber of Commerce have greeting cards made, perhaps carrying a photograph of the river along Front Street or perhaps the design on the Natchitoches plate. My idea would be to send the cards out as an Easter greeting along in March, bearing some such wording as

"The Town of Natchitoches wishes you a joyous Easter

(signed) Carmen Breazeale, Secretary,  
Chamber of Commerce."

and then do the same thing early in November, with "Holiday Greetings" substituted for Easter in the Spring ones. In this way, the Easter cards would remind people of the Natchitoches country at a time when ideas for summer holidays begin germinating, and the November cards would somewhat subtly remind them of the impending pre-Christmas fireworks and lighting festivities.

With the envelopes being made every day when people register, the sum total would be addressed without any strain and I am under the impression a lot of people would be delighted to be thus remembered and the tourist trade might benefit accordingly.

In mid afternoon none other than Irma Somperyc Willard appeared, bringing with her two of Ada Jack Carver's aunts with her. They seemed entranced with what they had to see, not having been here in twenty years and therefore having forgotten much, I suppose. They said that Ada's son, David Small, was in Louisiana and they asked if I would receive him and his Mother. I would. And so they went on their way, and I back to my gardening until first dark.

I was interested in Howard K. Smith's report, in his chat with Ed. Morrow, concerning the state of Winston Churchill's health. I had gathered from the reports at the time of the Bermuda conference that he was failing but I hadn't realized before that his physical strength is vastly impaired, so that he has to be helped upstairs and so on. Surely he should resign but the type of person who could keep all flags flying in 1940 is not the type to withdraw whether circumstances seem to warrant such a move, I suppose. I am so glad he retained his health long enough to complete his history of the war I can think of no world leader who so richly deserves rest.....

6478

Thursday, December 31st, 1953.

Memorandum:

This is the kind of a New Year's Eve I like.

It's quiet.

The sky is a "darksome veil of blue" and were Yucca Saint Cloud, Sir Walter might in truth remark that "ten thousand stars combine to light the terrace....."

Two or three invitations for New Year's Eve parties came in by telephone today. I believe Pat is going to a dance at the Country Club and J. H. and Celeste are attending some kind of a swing out some place in town. Celeste telephoned me at 3 this afternoon, --I had not seen her at the coffee hour, --saying she was having guests at 4 and asking if I would drop my gardening long enough to pass by. I would. There were lots of Marie Antoinettes present and some excellent champagne with salted pecanes and the usual delicious odds and ends. Within half an hour I had had an opportunity to greet the guests and although no secretaries were in the offing, I lied and said I had to go and attend to them. It was all very pleasant and the half hour had rounded up all that needed attending to, so far as I was concerned.

In pursuance of my idea of having the plantation bell engraved, I did a bit of telephoning about the Parish to see where it could be done and discovered nobody was available to undertake it. I shall accordingly send the bell to New Orleans by Celeste when she heads down that way next Friday and she can leave it with an engraver there. J. H. will fly down to the Crescent City on Saturday and join the train taking the R. E. A. people to Miami, and on their way back, the bell can be brought back home, for a week should be able to get the engraving properly etched. Perhaps I mentioned yesterday how I proposed to have it worded:

"I belong to  
Melrose Plantation  
where I served  
Cammie G. Henry  
from 1898 to 1948."

On its return to Melrose, I think I shall place it in the



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African House, on the top of the old Edgar Allen Poe desk, perhaps  
balancing the candle, as appears in the photograph wherein Grandpa  
is assisting me at my bookkeeping.

I had hoped to put the finishing touches on the "Land of Uncle Tom"  
plate today, but too many pilgrims got into my hair. Perhaps  
I may have better luck on the morrow. I can't figure on much free time  
on Saturday or Sunday, what with half of Oklahoma probably heading  
Northward from tomorrow's Sugar Bowl game, with a goodly number of  
them stopping off here on their way North.

A package from Mary Pringle came to hand in the morning mail. It  
contains callenuna by the score and a flock of photographs of the  
dolls made by Linda Jones of Alexandria. The latter wants to have  
a book about her dolls published but she has some firm ideas as  
to the color of the binding, the inclusion of endless data having  
little to do with dolls, particulars about her parents, etc., etc.  
I shall put the young plants into the ground but I shall sit on  
the photographs for a few days and then probably ship them back, since  
what Linda wants is a "Mug Book" and she can negotiate with  
some local publisher, such as the Pelican Press, just as well as  
I can.

I got quite a bit of mail disposed of today but shall be  
unable to send any samples for a few days until I get it sorted.  
There was a letter from Robina who mentioned hearing from you, --to  
her obvious delight, and a letter from Martha Robinson, threatening  
to honor me with a visit immediately after the January primaries in  
New Orleans. Among the cards, some bearing messages, were many from  
people whose identity I have forgotten. Many of these I would  
acknowledge, but except for the cancellation mark, no address  
appears and so those people will be greeted with nothing but silence.

And now I am going to enjoy my reading machine a bit, --reading  
only the La Fontaine Fables and following same with a dab of a musicale  
after which, as is my custom, I shall meditate a bit in the  
shrine of the Blessed Martin, enumerating the blessings of which  
I am conscious that have come to me during 1953. And, Lord,  
how many there have been of which I know, and undoubtedly how many more  
which I have perhaps scarcely sensed.

But of one thing I am certain, the happiness of the whole  
year has swung about a single pivotal point, --Lyme, I  
and grateful am I to God for having, through such a medium,  
made my year and whatever follows, so happy.

And so Good Night and a Happy New Year.....